

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7500
stephen.owens@house.ks.gov



P.O. BOX 606
HESSTON, KANSAS 67062
(620) 869-9487

STEPHEN OWENS
74TH DISTRICT

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Friends & Colleagues:

Over the past week, Kansas citizens across the state have been bombarded by calls to reduce our gas consumption and turn off our lights to conserve energy. Our state has endured extremely harsh temperatures that have challenged us all in one way or another. Frozen pipes, livestock issues and rolling black outs are just a few of the trials many have faced. Yet, there is still one challenge forthcoming that ALL of us will face together: **How do we pay our Gas and Electric Bills in the coming months?**

No community in Kansas is exempt from what could be gas bills 20 times higher than last February. Whether you live in Wichita or Hesston, Olathe or Moundridge, Salina or Dodge City, whoever provides your gas service, they were forced to pay unimaginably high rates to ensure their patrons stayed warm. KWCH channel 12 has reported on it in Wichita, KSNT in Topeka and Fox 4 in Kansas City. Prices that average \$3 per mm/btu spiked to as high as \$622 per mm/btu. For context, can you imagine if your gasoline spiked to \$622 / gallon and you had to fill your tank in an emergency? This is what our communities have been dealing with since early last week and no one will be exempt.

City Council's, State Government and Federal Government officials are doing everything we can to deal with the outrageous gas and electricity bills that are coming:

Priority one was keeping the Gas on.

Priority two is figuring out how to pay these bills. The State of Kansas has declared an emergency as well as many counties in hopes of drawing down federal FEMA funds to assist, but there is no guarantee. We are doing everything we can to figure that out right now. We don't have all the answers, but we are working to the best of our ability to find them. We have a little time, but the burden is immense. It will take a team effort.

Priority Three: Figuring out who is responsible and if there is price gouging or price manipulation, to investigate and hold them accountable!

Hindsight is 20/20. We look back and see what could have been done differently and how to ensure this doesn't happen again, but for now, I would encourage you to support your community leaders. Prices are easing up as the warm weather approaches, but we will continue to work tirelessly on solutions. Remember, everyone pays a gas or electric bill just like you.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Owens