

**Prefiled Testimony of Ralph D. Tomlinson, Docket #14-CONS-863-CUIC  
LICENSE 334350**

Thank you for allowing us to speak this morning. As I have noted in my conversations with the Kansas Corporation Commission, I have serious concerns about the request by Altavista Energy to add more injection wells on the Jim Bell Lease.

First, I have expressed concerns about possible leaks from the wells. Altavista representatives have rejected those claims, noting that the wells are a "closed system." Yet I remain unconvinced that a well, a pipe stuck into an oil deposit hundreds of feet underground, can be defined as a closed system. Even if the system is closed, it can easily become open at any time, spilling oil and wastewater out onto the oilfield. Spills happen all too frequently. A recent report noted that as the rapidly growing oil industry in the neighboring state of Colorado produces an average of two spills per day. The industry often fails to report these spills, which sometimes contain benzene and other cancer-causing chemicals, to nearby landowners. Should a spill occur on the Jim Bell Lease, it could endanger the local watershed, which flows into the Douglas County State Fishing Lake.

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More importantly, any spill could contain radioactive materials.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, oil and gas deposits “contain naturally-occurring radionuclides, which are referred to as “NORM” (Naturally-Occurring Radioactive Materials).” Oil and gas deposits in Kansas and elsewhere are found where ancient seas once covered the earth, and the briny saltwater from these ancient seas often contains dissolved radioactive materials.

While the levels of naturally-occurring radioactive materials are lower in Kansas than in other states, one of the most common sources of radioactive materials is scrap pipe from the oil and gas industry. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment drafted a special report on how to deal with this radioactive scrap metal in 2010. Another dangerous source of radioactivity, radon gas, has been detected in the soil of nearly every county in the state. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and first leading cause of lung cancer for those who have never smoked, according to the EPA and KDHE. Oil drilling can release this odorless, colorless gas. While some might argue that the levels of exposure to the concentrated, naturally-occurring radioactive materials found in scrap from oil and gas wells or

radon gas is well within acceptable levels, it should be noted that some scientists say there is no “safe” level of exposure.

Finally, as my neighbor Mr. Earles has noted, KCC lacks the staff to monitor the growing number of oil and gas wells throughout the state. Forty inspectors are responsible for more than 70,000 wells.

I would also like to join Mr. Earles in urging Kansas to lead the way in the development of renewable energy resources. Injection wells are a tool to extract the last drips of oil from the ground to feed our oil addiction. They are a dangerous tool, which can contaminate our soil and water. We’re endangering not only our health and well-being, but also the health of future generations. The future, the only safe future, lies in renewable energy. Germany produces nearly 75 percent of its energy from renewable sources, but the United States is struggling to reach 20 percent. Just as Kansas led the way to abolish slavery, it must lead the way to abolish our dependence on coal, oil and gas for our energy needs.