

## Rice, Howard

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**From:** Don Wallace <123dhwallace@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:48 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Cc:** Savastino, Andrew; Lucas, Quinton; MayorQ; robin.ganahl; Clerk; O'Neill, Kevin; Robinson, Melissa; Duncan, Johnathan; Bunch, Eric; French, Lindsay; MO Chapter, Thomas Hart Benton Group ExCom  
**Subject:** Opposition to Proposed Ordinance #230891

October 24, 2023

TO: KCMO City Council Transportation, Infrastructure, and Operations Committee  
RE: Opposition to Proposed Ordinance #230891

On behalf of the Legislative Committee of the Sierra Club Thomas Hart Benton Group we would like to raise concerns with the KCMO Proposed Ordinance #230891 by which the Water Services Department is proposing for a Biogas Use Applications Project. As it stands, this ordinance should be rejected, and the City Council should hold off taking any action until more consideration is made of alternatives through robust discussion that engages all sectors of our City and community.

Sierra Club attended the October 23 meeting of the Climate Protection Steering Committee and listened to the discussion among committee members, and city staff. From the concerns raised by the Committee and information shared by KC Water, it is clear there has not been enough consideration of alternatives to the proposed action in Ord. 230891 and that there has been insufficient public engagement. Further, the proposed ordinance does not provide any guarantee that the RNG diverted from the wastewater treatment plant will be used to offset the use of non-renewable natural gas. The City of Kansas City demanded better than this when it adopted its Climate Protection Plan, and it should not allow staff to deviate from it here.

We see a critical issue being raised by the process by which this proposed ordinance has been advanced by City Staff to the City Council for its consideration. In the Docket Memo it states affirmatively that this proposed agreement with Spire will:

*Develop environmentally sound and sustainable infrastructure strategies that improve quality of life and foster economic growth*

The Docket Memo is opaque on the process for how this determination was made. It is not made clear from the Memo how this initiative will lead to "faster economic growth." In discussions before the Climate Steering Committee, the message from KC Water was that it would be using the methane from the wastewater facility to power the facility itself without assurance that it will supply other homes, let alone other hard to service areas in the City.

Regarding the assertion of sustainability, there is no mention of whether the KCMO Office of Environmental Quality was involved in making this determination. Furthermore, there is no indication in the Docket Memo of a metric for how this determination was made. The document does assert that RNG will allow "KC Water to meet key sustainability goals," without specifically identifying these goals. There is no reference to a City document that would describe these goals.

There is no acknowledged connection to the current Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan, let alone mention of the word "climate" in this Docket Memo. In the development of the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan reliance upon RNG was purposely omitted. Perhaps, a means is needed for transitioning from fossil fuels, but RNG was omitted from the Plan for consideration as a transitional source of energy. Further, it is unclear how RNG will serve merely as a transitional form of energy, when the word "transition" is not used in the Docket Memo, let alone discussion regarding the parameters of this transition period.

The process that led to this proposal could only benefit from the transparency that is needed for the citizens of Kansas City to see that the City is conscientiously considering the goals and framework approved in the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan.

These process issues need to be explicitly raised not only for this proposed ordinance, but for other such infrastructure initiatives that will appear in the future. The Kansas City community needs reassurance that OEQ is involved in the assessment of these

initiatives and that there is compliance with the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan. In developing these initiatives, the Kansas City community needs to see that meaningful efforts have been made to consult with the relevant citizen advisory committees.

The success of the Climate Protection and Resiliency Plan depends on a well-informed City Council and an ever-watchful and engaged citizenry which itself is dependent on a transparent process for approval of these initiatives for infrastructure projects that will have a great impact on the quality of our environment and on our progress to meeting climate goals.

Please, reject further consideration of this proposed ordinance until more consideration is made of alternatives through robust discussion that engages all sectors of our City and community.

Sincerely,

Don Wallace,  
Member Legislative Committee  
THB Group of Missouri Chapter of Sierra Club  
Resident, Sixth District, KCMO

//cc:

KCMO City Clerk  
Quinton Lucas KCMO Mayor  
Andrew Savastino, KCMO Chief Environmental Officer  
Robin Gahnahl, KCMO Climate Plan Steering Committee

## Rice, Howard

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**From:** Mary Kay McGinty <marykaymcginty@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 10:13 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Subject:** Ordinance #230891

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today in opposition to Ordinance #230891. Spire proposes to build a renewable natural gas (RNG) facility at the KC Wastewater Treatment plant at the expense of the ratepayers to the tune of \$100 million. This is a terrible and costly idea.

First of all, the term renewable is simply greenwashing by the gas industry to delay essential electrification of all systems through clean energy sources like wind or solar. Natural gas utilities don't like the move to all-electric one bit. The more all-electric buildings there are, the fewer natural gas ratepayers there are. An all-electric future inevitably involves the increased obsolescence of natural gas utilities.

Additionally, since monopoly natural gas utilities don't make money on the sale of gas, they charge a rate for gas that is meant to cover their costs, the costs of new investments in natural gas infrastructure, and a healthy fixed rate of return on those investments. In other words, they make profits by building stuff. Naturally, they want to build more stuff like an RNG facility.

Finally, RNG is not as low-carbon as the industry claims and its local air and water impacts are concentrated in vulnerable communities. When burned, RNG releases nitrous oxide, a pollutant that creates smog and lowers air quality. These toxins can cause respiratory illnesses, like asthma. Even if it were low-carbon and equitable, there simply isn't enough of it to substitute for more than a small fraction of natural gas. And even if it were low-carbon, equitable, and abundant, it still wouldn't be an excuse to expand natural gas infrastructure or slow electrification.

To summarize, the city should not be backing expensive, false climate change solutions like RNG but instead should be investing in more clean all-electric energy sources like wind and solar. Over the centuries, humanity has given up many things once thought essential to our lives like the horse and buggy or steam trains when better things came along. It's time to give up gas and electrify everything with increasingly less expensive wind and solar. Please do not approve the costly Ordinance #230891.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Mary Kay McGinty  
6th District Resident  
5801 Kenwood Ave  
KCMO 64110



## Rice, Howard

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**From:** Karen Uhlenhuth <karen.uhlenhuth@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 10:52 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Subject:** Ordinance 230891

Hello.

I live in the Midtown area, and am very concerned about our climate spiraling out of control. It's not a future problem; it is a now problem.

The city council clearly took a position in the climate plan a year ago to reduce carbon emissions in KC. Methane - also known as natural gas - is the fossil fuel that we most need to eliminate from our fuel portfolio. As you probably know, it retains many times more heat than does carbon dioxide for several decades. That means that removing methane from our economy has a big and rapid impact on global heating.

Ordinance 230891 would take us in the opposite direction, towards more reliance on methane. The bill would allow Spire to capture gas produced at city facilities such as landfills and wastewater facilities, and to add that to the gas pipeline. Although on the face of it this seems like a move towards clean energy, it would actually perpetuate our reliance on unnatural methane gas.

The city should not go along with this plan by Spire to keep itself in business. We need to move as quickly as possible away from fracked gas, and that means moving away from gas from local landfills and water treatment plants as well.

Also, this will require construction of new gas facilities, and that would mean higher bills for customers. We should not spend customer funds to keep the gas industry in business.

Thank you, and please vote No on Ord. 230891

Karen Uhlenhuth

*"Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. There is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves. It is up to us."*

*- the late astronomer Carl Sagan*

## Rice, Howard

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**From:** Katie Hasty <katie@kidatchristmas.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 11:45 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony; Duncan, Johnathan; Bunch, Eric; Robinson, Melissa; O'Neill, Kevin; French, Lindsay; Day, Reid; Bough, Andrea; Foster, Katrina; Hays, Madison; Iden, Marissa; Ross, Lisa  
**Subject:** Reference Ordinance 230891

Dear Chairman O'Neill, Vice Chairwoman Robinson, and members of the Committee,

I strongly urge you to oppose Ordinance 230891.

This isn't a win for Kansas Citizens: Gas bills to customers will increase. At the same time, we need to make real moves toward a fossil fuel-free future — and this ordinance isn't it.

### What Experts are Saying About Renewable Natural Gas

"Replacing fossil gas with lower carbon alternatives causes the rates of the State's largest gas utility, Baltimore Gas & Electric, to increase two to three times 2021 levels by 2035 and **seven to 11 times 2021 levels by 2050**, with similar ranges of rate increases for Maryland's two other large gas utilities. Such rates are not sustainable. As rates increase to these levels, the resulting high bills will lead many customers — likely most all customers who have options — to leave the gas system, leaving behind customers without alternatives." - Report for the Maryland Office of People's Counsel on the combined impacts of electrification and fuel decarbonization on gas rates. (Maryland OPC 2022a)

"[RNG] is a ruse. If gas utilities get their way, they will invest millions of ratepayer dollars into new gas pipeline infrastructure designed to bring the meager amounts of RNG to their customers. Then, when the supply of RNG can't meet the demand, as it assuredly cannot, utilities might quietly meet that demand with fossil gas, thereby reversing any benefits RNG might provide. At most, the US might be able to produce enough RNG to offset 15 percent of gas usage today, but only at a **five-fold cost increase** and with a carbon footprint that is still 55 to 60 percent that of conventional natural gas." - ["The Smoke and Mirrors Defense of RNG"](#) - Laura Feinstein and Eric de Place, Sightline Institute

"...[G]enerating RNG to provide a small percentage replacement of fossil gas in pipelines is unlikely to provide much, if any, benefit. In a world seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, our better strategy is to electrify as much as possible. This is because even though electricity may currently be generated in part from fossil fuels, the direction we are heading is to convert that generation to clean renewable energy sources. - ["What's Up with RNG \(Renewable Natural Gas\) and Other Fossil Gas Alternatives?"](#), South Oregon Climate Action Network, 2022

"[Report](#) after report has concluded that relying on 'renewable' gas to reduce building emissions would be expensive and not technically feasible. Propping up a polluting industry with false climate solutions would make these problems worse for communities that live nearby. Hydrogen and 'renewable gas' should not be piped into buildings for heating or cooking and should instead be reserved for the sectors of our economy that will be more difficult to decarbonize in the years ahead, such as energy-intensive industrial uses, air travel, or shipping. Any suggestion otherwise is simply a dangerous, greenwashed effort by the gas industry in an attempt to keep us hooked on fossil fuels. ["Avoid False Solutions for Clean and Healthy Buildings: Greenwashed Hydrogen and So-Called "Renewable" Gas are Not Viable Alternatives to Clean Electricity for Homes and Buildings"](#) - Sierra Club, 2023

"The reality is that energy companies' push to promote RNG has less to do with moving toward a clean energy system than with locking gas into our energy future and entrenching and expanding existing fossil fuel infrastructure." - ["Renewable Natural Gas is not your friend"](#), Frontier Group 2022



"It isn't a close call. The research is clear: RNG is not a viable alternative for decarbonizing buildings. It is a desperate bid by natural gas utilities to delay their inevitable decline. Policymakers would be foolish to fall for it." -  
"The false promise of 'renewable natural gas,'" David Roberts

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katie Hasty  
1255 W. 72nd Street  
Kansas City, MO 64114

## Rice, Howard

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**From:** Nikki Goodson <present.nrg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 23, 2023 9:24 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Subject:** Ordinance 230891

Hello,

I'm writing to make public comment on Ordinance 230891.

While I do see in the Docket Memo that this is being promoted as an environmentally friendly proposal ("this project reduces the onsite greenhouse gas emissions relative to combusting the gas."), it seems contrary to the approved Climate Plan. Please consider whether this project actually puts **more** emphasis on an outdated, unsafe, and unapproved energy source (so-called "natural" gas). I also see mention of a 20-year contract, which certainly could block **real** forward movement: a focus on sources such as wind & solar power.


Please read between the lines of the green-washing verbiage being used in this proposal.

Thank you!

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Nikki Goodson  
905 E Gregory Blvd

she/her/hers

Life is available only in the present moment.

 PUBLIC  
**SPEAKER CARD**

Date 11/26/2023

Agenda item # 230891

Karen Uhlenhuth

NAME (Please print)

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karen.uhlenhuth@gmail.com

EMAIL ADDRESS

Myself

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED

I wish to address the Council:  Yes  No

In favor  Opposed  Other Not sure

Comments: WWT should not release me there into the  
at was phase - best solution would be to use on site

Thank you for your interest and participation in city government.

Please contact the City Clerk with any questions, **816-513-6401** or **clerk@kcmo.org**





**PUBLIC  
SPEAKER CARD**

Date 10/25/23

Agenda item # 230891

SCOTT MARTIN

NAME (Please print)

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Burns & McDonnell

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED

I wish to address the Council:  Yes  No

In favor  Opposed  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest and participation in city government.  
Please contact the City Clerk with any questions, **816-513-6401** or **clerk@kcmo.org**

