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Legislative Leaders Issue Bi-partisan, Bi-cameral Statement in Opposition to Gov's Veto of Energy Bill

Topeka - In response to today's veto by Governor Kathleen Sebelius of the Energy bill, House Substitute for SB 327, legislative leaders offered the following comments:

Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, stated, "I strongly disagree with the Governor on this very important public policy issue. Not allowing clean coal technology to be part of Kansas' energy future will result in a devastating increase in the average Kansan's electric bill. I believe we will need all forms of energy – gas, coal, nuclear, wind, solar and others to meet our future electricity needs. The proposed Holcomb project would be one of the most environmentally friendly and responsible in the world, and would result in \$3.6 billion of much needed economic development in Western Kansas. I will be working with Speaker Neufeld to gain the necessary votes to override this unfortunate veto."

"The people of Kansas have made it clear they intend to have a sound energy policy that is also environmentally friendly and have encouraged us to take the first step by allowing this project to continue. We agree, and are proud to represent those wishes. We were hopeful that the Governor would recognize the will of her constituency, and disappointed that she has chosen another more personally driven direction," said Speaker of the House Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls.

Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington, Ranking Minority member of the Senate Utilities Committee, said "I am very concerned for the people in my district and all of western Kansas. Without adequate baseload energy, there is the potential for significant increases in electric rates for consumers. I respect and support the Governor, but I firmly disagree with her on this issue."

Sen. Jay Scott Emler, R-Lindsborg, Chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee said "It is extremely disappointing for the governor not to support the rule of law. There is a proper way and an improper way to change the law. Unfortunately, this veto supports the latter."

"I am disappointed in the Governor's decision. I feel we need to move forward with a balanced statewide energy policy that takes into consideration the environment and also is realistic of the direction of our future energy supply," added Rep. Carl Holmes, R-Liberal, House Energy and Utilities Committee Chairman.

"Senate Bill 327 is one of the most aggressive steps we have taken to spur major development of renewable energy and investment in conservation. It embraces new technology that would reduce Kansas' dependence on less efficient energy sources. In turn, this will increase our ability to phase out older, more polluting sources of energy," said Rep. Eber Phelps, D-Hays.