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February 21, 2023

Senator Bruce Bostelman, Chair, and Members of the Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB255 (Brewer) Change eminent domain and renewable energy generation provisions relating to certain power suppliers

OPPOSE – *Please include this position statement from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB255.*

Dear Senator Bostelman and Members of the Natural Resources Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska believes that energy conservation and the use of renewable resources must be a part of any national or state energy program. We oppose LB255 for its prohibition of Nebraska public utilities from using their right of eminent domain to seize privately-owned land to build solar and wind electrical generation facilities.

Wind and solar energy are clean energy sources important to the energy future of Nebraska. This bill targets these renewable resources, excluding them from electric generation use, specifically in Lincoln and Omaha. The LWWNE believes in the use of a variety of energy sources, with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy efficient technologies.

As an example of wind energy powering our communities in a time of need, Omaha Public Power District's wind generation was critical in the recent Winter Storm Elliott (December 2022) when the North Omaha Station tripped offline due to low levels of water in the Missouri River. This was officially reported by the OPPD president at their Jan. 19, 2023, directors meeting.

LB255 would make renewable energy projects more costly, resulting in the cost being borne by public power customers. Shelley Sahling-Zart, vice president and general counsel at Lincoln Electric System is concerned that LB255 would "erode LES's eminent domain authority and erodes local control."

We need to broaden our resources and not solely rely on coal, oil and natural gas, which are known to release carbon emissions into our atmosphere furthering global warming.

For all these reasons, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska urges the Natural Resources Committee to not advance LB255.

Respectfully,

Janelle Stevenson and Megan Lyons
Natural Resources and Energy Co-Directors, LWWNE
MaryLee Moulton, LWWNE president