I. CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE
   1. Letter of Support, LES Board Position - Bruce Johnson
In addition to the comments sent directly to the council members, we would sincerely appreciate if the attached letter to Mayor Gaylor Baird was distributed to each of the Council members as part of their information packets.

Thank you. Bruce Johnson
June 27, 2019

Dear Mayor Gaylor Baird:

We are writing on behalf of the Nebraska Elder Climate Legacy Initiative in support of former Senator Ken Haar’s application for appointment to the Lincoln Electric System board. The Nebraska Elder Climate Legacy is a group of older Nebraskans that includes emeriti professors nationally renowned for their expertise in climate science and agricultural research, as well as leaders in education, public policy and advocacy. We work to educate the public about the challenges presented by climate change and the opportunities to respond to it and advocate policies that support adaptation to the impacts and mitigate the causes of climate change. We are motivated by our love for our children and grandchildren.

Senator Ken Haar is an extremely well-qualified candidate for the LES administrative board. His long record of service to the City of Lincoln and State of Nebraska includes 8 years as a member of the Lincoln City Council and 8 years in the Nebraska Legislature. He is widely considered the most important Nebraska environmental policy maker of the past 20 years, providing leadership that led to the enactment of legislation supporting wind development, net metering, funding tools for energy efficiency and action on climate change.

Senator Haar has taken on controversial issues in the face of daunting opposition and demonstrated the ability to build consensus with policy makers with opposing viewpoints. His efforts that led to a special session of the Legislature to address the siting of the Keystone XL pipeline is a dramatic example. When he began calling for a special session, few gave it much of a chance. By the end of the process, not only did Republican Governor Dave Heineman call a special session, legislation providing for a siting process for major oil pipelines was unanimously passed by the members of the Legislature.

We appreciate and support the comments you have made about the need for action on climate change, both while you were on the City Council and as a candidate for Mayor. Changes in the Lincoln Electric System’s approach would provide the most direct pathway for this community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The most obvious method is by reducing its investment in coal fired generation and increasing its investment in renewable energy. LES can also expand its efforts to increase energy efficiency through incentives for homeowners and businesses.

However, some recent contacts with LES board and staff would suggest they are not very open to more aggressive timelines for achieving these changes in its generation portfolio and fostering greater user efficiency. In contrast, on June 20th, OPPD announced plans to begin studying a pathway to decarbonize its generation process. This is dramatically different from OPPD’s position one year ago.
One of the reasons OPPD has made such dramatic changes is the fact they have a strong majority of clean energy advocates who have been elected to their board of directors since 2016. For example, in the 2018 election cycle, clean energy advocates Eric Williams, Janece Molhoff and Amanda Bogner defeated incumbents and were elected to the OPPD board.

The City of Lincoln needs Ken Haar on the Lincoln Electric System administrative board. He understands that it is imperative to take action on climate change, that we need to do everything we can to address its causes as soon as we can. He also understands and supports the moral and policy imperatives of public power to provide reliable and affordable electricity to serve its customer owners. We need Ken Haar’s leadership to help develop policies and goals that address all these imperatives in a way that benefits the people of Lincoln, for now and for our future.

Your administration has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on addressing climate change and promoting sustainability. For the sake of your children and ours, we urge you to appoint Ken Haar to the Lincoln Electric System administrative board.

Sincerely,

Bruce Johnson

Founding member of the Nebraska Elder Climate Legacy