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Kansas AARP Opposes Westar Rate Increase

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) AARP Kansas says it is opposed to a proposed settlement before regulators that would allow the state's largest electric company to increase its rates by \$50 million.

Topeka-based Westar Energy reached an agreement with the staff of the Kansas Corporation Commission, which regulates utilities, and other parties. Westar initially sought a \$91 million rate increase, arguing it needed higher revenues to cover rising costs.

The agreement for the smaller increase still must be approved by the commission, and it plans to start hearings on the proposal Monday.

AARP Kansas Director Maren Turner said the agreement would allow Westar stockholders to earn excessive profits from rates paid by struggling families. The agreement would set the monopoly service provider's allowable profit at 10 percent.