



To: Wisconsin Legislature

From: Bill Skewes, Executive Director, Wisconsin Utilities Association
Steve Freese, Executive Director, Wisconsin Electric Co-op Association
Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin

Re: LRB 3720 Co-sponsorship Request

Date: November 10, 2015

As you may know, proposed legislation is currently circulating for co-sponsorship from Rep. Steffen and Sen. Wangaard to increase the penalty for damage to utility property with the intent to substantially interrupt & impair service and create a new trespassing on protected utility property penalty.

Under the bill, the penalty for utility trespass would be a Class H felony and intentionally and substantially damaging utility property such as a power plant or substation would increase from a misdemeanor to a Class H felony (\$10,000 & up to six years).

On behalf of Wisconsin's investor owned gas and electric utilities and electric cooperatives, the **Wisconsin Utilities Association (WUA), Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin (MEUW) and Wisconsin Electric Co-op Association (WECA) support this legislation and respectfully request that you co-sponsor LRB 3720** to help protect our critical infrastructure and the society and economy it supports from intentional, substantial disruption.

WUA, MEUW & WECA maintain that this legislation is needed because the higher penalties should reflect the greater threat to critical infrastructure that exists today than what existed even 10 years ago. Previously, penalties were designed to deter and punish relatively minor crimes such as vandalism and copper theft.

However, as our energy system has become more complex and digitally interconnected, threats to physical and cyber security of the system have significantly increased, the consequences for which are far more serious than a localized service disruption.

This bill will strengthen our energy reliability by giving prosecutors additional tools to deter and, if necessary, punish, those who would intentionally and substantially disable our heat, light, cooling and power systems.

Please co-sponsor LRB 3720.