



March 19, 2019

House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications
Chairman, Representative Joe Seiwert
Vice Chair, Representative Mark Schreiber
Ranking Member, Representative Annie Kuether

Greetings Chairman and Members of the Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue with each of you.

The issue before us is one that has devastated an entire community because of negligence from a utility company.

District I residents in 67214 were shocked and appalled late last year when they began seeing the construction and installation of 105ft tall metal poles along a Westar transmission route through the heart of a low-income majority black and brown neighborhood.

Unfortunately, since this transgression occurred in Wichita, I have heard of other locations around the state where utility upgrades occurred in similar lower income areas.

This is unacceptable for neighborhoods to have these horrific 105ft transmission lines running through the homes. No one should have to see these poles in their front yard.

Any self-respecting individual would want to have an opportunity to see the true visual of what is coming to their neighborhood, to have a say in how their community will continue to look and a simple chance to discuss alternative routes.

To this day residents are angry and disgusted with how these utility poles look in the neighborhood and I would invite you all to travel on I-135 and look both East and West between 21st street and Central here in Wichita. These are the only poles visible from the highway for several miles.

I would simply ask that you support giving citizens a voice in how their communities look, feel, and their ability to maintain property values.

This bill gives residents a chance to hear the truth from utility companies before work is done because even a company with the best of intentions can make a generational mistake as we see in my district.

Thank you for your time,

Brandon J. Johnson
Council Member
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