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February 8, 2023

Re: SB 68 – Providing incumbent electric transmission owners a right of first refusal for the construction of certain electric transmission lines

Oral In-Person

Opponent

From:

Maxine Goucher, AARP Kansas Volunteer

AARP Kansas, 785-221-2827

Chairman Robert Olson

Senate Committee on Utilities

Good afternoon, Chairman Olson and committee members. My name is Maxine Goucher and I am an AARP Kansas Executive Council Volunteer. We are a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works across Kansas to strengthen communities and advocate for issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, reliable and affordable utilities, and protection from financial abuse.

AARP has more than 278,000 members in Kansas. Many of our members have low or fixed incomes. Others live on their Social Security alone. The dramatic escalation in utility rates that we are seeing in Kansas and across the entire nation poses a special concern for households with residents over age 50.

AARP opposes SB 68 which would grant the incumbent monopoly utility the right of first refusal to build new long-distance transmission lines in their service area.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Southwest Power Pool (SPP) policy currently require the regional transmission organization (*RTO*) to solicit competitive bids and grant construction rights to the lowest cost bidder.

With billions planned on such new transmission lines, this policy is designed to keep the rate impact of such construction more affordable.



This bill is an end run around this commonsense policy. There is no inherent benefit to allowing the local utility the exclusive right to build new transmission lines.

Therefore, we urge a no vote on SB 68.

Sincerely yours,