

Senate Utilities Committee  
HB 2461  
Testimony by Paul E. Lira Business Manager  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 304  
March 16, 2005

Chairman Emler and members of the committee, My name is Paul Lira, I currently serve as Business Manager for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 304 and a former electrical Lineman for the utility industry for 20 years. Our organization covers 2400 workers through out the state of Kansas including half of the Rural Electric Cooperatives, Westar Energy, Aquila, Kansas Gas Service, and independent contractors doing utility work in Kansas such as Wrights Tree Service, Salina Tree, Par Electrical Contractors, Capital Electric Line Builders, and numerous others.

Since the hours of service regulations have been in affect it has created hardship on maintaining compliance for the workers driving utility trucks maintaining and restoring service for the customers in Kansas. It is our belief that when the federal government changed the Department of Transportation Regulations that the intended target was not utility workers but over the road truck drivers. As a result of this regulation we have been faced with penalties previously geared toward over the road truckers and it has been a challenge for utility workers to stay compliant.

With the adoption of HB 2461 a one call contact would help ease the confusion of being exempted for hours of service while doing the necessary long hour restorations. We maintain our integrity on safety and our trained to work under adverse conditions. We would still be under all other regulation governing the use of DOT covered vehicles. Currently, there is a fine balance the work force must juggle to maintaining extended hours for service restoration and not compromise the hours of service regulations. The

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 304 supports the Division of Emergency Management in making the determinations for a State of Emergency in situations involving major utility interruptions as they would be knowledgeable of conditions and consistent in making the calls for exemptions. As weather conditions are constantly changing our service areas don't usually follow the patterns or outage needs and a centralized contact point seems to be the best solution.

Thank you for your time allowing me to express our point of view on behalf of our member workforce. I will be glad to answer any questions.