



# Empire District

A Liberty Utilities<sup>®</sup> Company

## TESTIMONY

Senate Committee on Utilities

SB 209

An Act concerning utilities; relating to electric rates; billing standards;  
Concerning the state corporation commission; powers and duties.

Whitney Damron

On behalf of The Empire District Electric Company

[www.empiredistrict.com](http://www.empiredistrict.com)

## OPPONENT

Good afternoon Chairman Olson and Members of the Committee:

I am Whitney Damron and I appear before you today on behalf of The Empire District Electric Company in opposition to SB 209.

By way of information, Empire is headquartered in Joplin, Missouri and its footprint has portions of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Empire is a regulated utility providing electric, natural gas (through its wholly-owned subsidiary The Empire District Gas Company) and water service, to approximately 218,000 customers in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. On January 3, 2017, Empire formally became a part of Liberty Utilities. Empire now serves as the headquarters for Liberty Utilities Central Region, serving nearly 340,000 customers in seven states.

In reviewing SB 209 and comparing it to Empire's current billing system, we would note the company already provides much of the information requested in this legislation.

Empire currently provides a detailed bill to its customers in print/mail or electronic billing format. In addition, information is available on its website to help customers better understand their bill and the charges contained on the bill.

SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE

DATE: 3/15/17

ATTACHMENT # 9

Itemized charges on an Empire bill include:

- Total monthly charge for service;
- Customer charge;
- Usage charge;
- Energy efficiency charge;
- Environmental recovery;
- Property tax rider;
- Energy cost adjustment;
- Franchise fee;
- County tax; and
- City tax.

In addition, significant explanatory information on billing charges is contained on the bill and on Empire's website. And, of course, customer service representatives of Empire, like all public utilities, are available to assist customers with billing questions.

Empire questions the need for this legislation. To impose unduly detailed requests for itemization of electric utility bills that is not being requested by our customers seems inappropriate and unnecessary. Additionally, to provide such information will cause Empire, other electric utilities, and the KCC to incur substantial additional costs that will be borne by the customers who did not request the information.

Should the Kansas Legislature decide any of this makes for good public policy, we would respectfully suggest the KCC first review the legislation and attempt to develop standardization for the information being sought, and then allow electric utilities to post sample billing statements of average residential, commercial and industrial bills on their website. This would allow a customer to make a mathematic calculation as to what these costs are rather than mandating all of this information be placed on a monthly billing statement.

On behalf of The Empire District Electric Company, we thank the Committee for consideration of our concerns with this legislation and respectfully request it not move forward until more clarity and need are demonstrated to justify the expense.

Thank you.

Whitney Damron

To review a sample Empire bill, please refer to the following website:

<http://www.empiredistrict.com/CustomerService/Rates/Electric/KS>