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ETHAN CORSON
7TH DISTRICT

To: House Transportation Committee

From: Senator Ethan Corson

Date: March 16, 2021

RE: SB 167

Chairman Proehl, Vice Chair Delperdang, Ranking Member Helgerson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 167.

This straightforward worker safety measure was unanimously passed by both the Senate Transportation Committee and the full Senate. I was motivated to introduce this legislation after hearing from utility and telecommunications workers about the dangers and near-misses they face while doing their already difficult job on Kansas roadways. Indeed, we had an incident right here in Topeka where an Evergy service vehicle was rear-ended by a distracted driver.

SB 167 adds utility and telecommunications vehicles engaged in emergency repairs to the classification of emergency vehicles. This bill allows these vehicles to be classified this way without a board of county commissioner's designation.

Enacting this legislation will put Kansas in line with the 20 other states, including Missouri and Nebraska, that specifically include utility and telecommunications vehicles in their "Move Over" law. (Kansas law currently covers police, firefighters, paramedics, tow truck operators, and highway maintenance workers.) Including these vehicles in the Move Over law will mean that when one of these vehicles is stationary on the side of the road with its flashing lights on, an oncoming driver has to slow down and move over a lane, or if the driver is unable to move over safely, to slow down and exercise due caution.

As February's storms demonstrated, our utility and telecommunications workers brave the toughest conditions imaginable to keep on and restore our light, heat, and ability to communicate with loved ones. Passing this legislation will provide these workers with a small measure of additional protection as they go about their already dangerous job.

That is why this common sense legislation is supported by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU), Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), Evergy, Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU), Black Hills Energy,

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Kansas Gas Service, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (KEPCo), Sunflower Electric Power Corp., and Atmos Energy.

I respectfully ask that the Committee advance this bill to the full House to protect the safety of these vital workers.

Senator Ethan Corson