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House Bill 2226
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Neutral
FROM: Steven Cowen, Black Hills Energy, 785-832-3938
TO: Senate Utilities Committee

Thank you, Chair Olson and members of the committee, for the opportunity to provide comments today on House Bill 2226 which modifies the Kansas Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act (KUUDPA). Black Hills Energy is a natural gas utility proudly serving approximately 119,000 customers in 66 Kansas communities. All together the Black Hills Energy family serves 1.3 million natural gas and electric customers in eight states.

The safety of Black Hills Energy's customers, its employees, communities in which we provide natural gas service, along with system reliability, is our top priority. Black Hills Energy is a committed partner in conversations about how we can work together with all stakeholders to reduce and eliminate third-party damage to Black Hills Energy's facilities.

HB 2226 provides some favorable updates to the KUUDPA that Black Hills Energy readily supports, such as digital whitelining and enhancements to notification if a facility is damaged. However, Black Hills Energy's experience in administrating its pipeline location obligations is that the current 15-day ticket life currently in statute K.S. A. 66-1804 is the optimal period for advance notification by an excavator of its intent of excavation. Given the Kansas weather, including wind and other elements, the integrity of utility markings is placed into more jeopardy for each day the 15-day deadline is extended for excavation before a new or updated location request must be made by an Excavator. Black Hills Energy appreciates the willingness of the proponent to hear concerns about extending the ticket life during stakeholder conversations and finding middle ground on the issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2226.