

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1258
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
JANUARY 23, 2025

JUSTIN DEVER - SENIOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST, MDU RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

Good morning, Chairman Porter and members of the Committee.

My name is Justin Dever, and I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 1258 on behalf of MDU Resources Group and its subsidiary, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. Montana-Dakota proudly serves 158 communities in North Dakota with electricity and natural gas.

House Bill 1258 proposes that the siting process for electric transmission facilities should align with the existing process for gas or liquid transmission facilities.

- Paragraph a remains unchanged, stating that electric energy conversion facilities must adhere to local land use and zoning regulations.
- Paragraph b stipulates that a state permit would override any local land use or zoning regulations, with specific exceptions detailed in the bill.
- Paragraph c mandates that applicants must comply with road use agreements unless deemed unreasonably restrictive by the Public Service Commission.
- Paragraph d contains a notice requirement to townships, cities, and counties and having them provide the Public Service Commission with local requirements for consideration.
- Paragraph e states that applicant must comply with the local requirements that are approved by the Public Service Commission.

This bill aligns procedural requirements for electric transmission facilities with those for gas or liquid transmission facilities, providing consistency and certainty. It offers appropriate state-level oversight while ensuring reliability, resource adequacy, and promoting economic development.

A prime example of the importance of this bill is the Jamestown to Ellendale transmission line (JETx). This significant project will enhance electric reliability and resilience in North Dakota, meeting the region's energy needs and supporting economic growth. This project is being developed by Otter Tail Power Company and MDU. Information about the JETx project can be found at <https://jamestowntoellendale.com/>.

I am accompanied today by Rob Frank, the Director of Electric Transmission Engineering for Montana-Dakota Utilities. He is available to answer any questions you might have regarding MDU's transmission system.

I respectfully urge the committee to recommend a "Do Pass" on HB 1258.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for allowing me to speak with you today.