



March 14, 2025

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivision Committee,

The Lignite Energy Council (LEC) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2069. This bill is necessary to improve the efficiency and reliability of the public notice process for advancing critical energy infrastructure projects in North Dakota.

The development of energy projects, including transmission lines and generation facilities, requires careful planning and coordination with regulatory agencies. A key component of this process is the scheduling of public hearings by the Public Service Commission (PSC). Unfortunately, delays in meeting statutory public notice requirements have resulted in avoidable setbacks for projects that are essential to ensuring a reliable and affordable energy supply.

Currently, notice of public hearings for transmission line permits must be published twice in official newspapers of affected counties. While well-intended, this requirement has proven vulnerable to administrative errors and publication issues beyond the control of project developers and the PSC. A single missed notice can force the cancellation and rescheduling of hearings, causing delays that extend permitting timelines, increase costs, and jeopardize project schedules.

For energy projects operating on tight construction windows, even a short delay can have significant consequences. Missing a construction season due to a rescheduled hearing can push projects back by a year or more, leading to unnecessary financial burdens and potential disruptions to grid reliability. SB 2069 provides a commonsense solution by offering an alternative method to satisfy statutory notice requirements. Ensuring that public notice obligations can be met in a more flexible and dependable manner will prevent unnecessary project delays while maintaining transparency and public engagement in the regulatory process.

We also recognize that implementation of this change requires updates to the existing online notice system and support the necessary appropriation to the Secretary of State's office to facilitate this improvement. The Lignite Energy Council urges your support with a "Do Pass" recommendation for SB 2069 to provide a more efficient permitting process for energy infrastructure projects in North Dakota. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
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Lignite Energy Council

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