



North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
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January 31, 2025

To: North Dakota Senate – Energy and Natural Resources Committee
From: Josh Kramer, executive vice president and general manager, NDAREC
RE: **Support for SB 2339 – Strict Liability and Wildfire Mitigation Plan**

Chairman Patten and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I'm Josh Kramer, the general manager North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), and I'm here on behalf of our members to express our support for Senate Bill 2339. Our organization represents 17 electric distribution cooperatives and five generation and transmission cooperatives that generate, transmit and distribute electricity across the state of North Dakota. Collectively, North Dakota's electric cooperatives own and maintain 67,000 miles of power lines.

We support this legislation and believe a process that encourages and reinforces proactive measures on the frontend to mitigate the risk of wildfires and creates a guide to uniformity for wildfire prevention. We also recognize that, for mitigation plans to be most effective, coordination and collaboration is important as each independent electric cooperative further develops and modifies their own wildfire mitigation plan that is specially tailored to involve the appropriate officials and organizations within a cooperative's local service area.

Electric cooperatives are private, independent electric utilities owned by the consumer members they serve. Electric cooperatives have demonstrated an ability to be effectively self-regulated and governed by locally elected boards of directors. Safety, reliability and affordability are of utmost importance for our cooperatives. They care greatly about the safety of the people and communities they serve, because their employees and members live, work and volunteer in those same local communities.

Investor-owned and electric cooperative utilities are working together as proponents of this legislation, and we, voluntarily support further development, implementation and conversation on wildfire mitigation plans.

Chairman Patten and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to take questions.

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