

Representative Regier
Chairman, FRET Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, Montana

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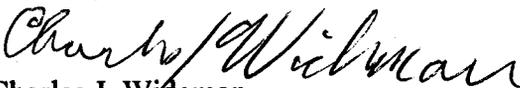
Because of the death of a close friend in Butte, I was unable to attend the hearing on SB 180 on Friday March 21, 2013. I would like you and your committee to accept this late testimony on that bill. I am a strong proponent of SB 180 for several reasons.

1. SB 180 clearly restores the right of eminent domain as it existed in Montana for over 100 years. A companion bill, SB 288, sets forth a clear definition of the new type of transmission facility called Merchant Transmission Line, and in combination these two bills go a long way in correcting a situation created by the passage of HB 198 in the last legislative session. Because there are presently no new or proposed Merchant Lines being considered by MDEQ, the time is right for establishing the clear difference between Merchant and Distribution Lines.
2. Every Montana citizen, the people you were elected to serve, has declared there is a problem with eminent domain. Only corporate lobbyists have tried to convince the legislature that there is no problem. I have taken the advise of President Ike Eisenhower when he said "beware of corporate power".
3. Citizens are admonished that we must all make scarifies for the public good. I happen to be of one of the generations that have always scarified for public good, but we are mature enough to distinguish between public good and corporate good (greed).

And finally on a more personal note, I find that it is extremely difficult to be vilified by a corporate lobbyist who attacks private citizens when they are trying to fulfill their civic responsibilities by expressing their concerns about pending legislation. It seems far easier to attack citizens and cloud the issue rather than discussing the merits of the bill. Perhaps as legislators you are accustomed to personal attacks, and if so you certainly have my sympathy because they must be terribly concerning.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony, and I strongly urge you to pass SB 180.

Sincerely


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Cc: FRET Committee Members