



Minnesota Rural Electric Association



11640 73rd Avenue N | Maple Grove, MN 55369 | p: 763-424-1020 f: 763-424-5820 | [www.mrea.org](http://www.mrea.org)

March 9, 2023

Dear Chair Dibble and Members, Senate Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SF 2687. The Minnesota Rural Electric Association represents the interests of 50 electric cooperatives throughout the State of MN who serve 1.7 million member-owners. We would like to express our support for SF 2687 and very much appreciate Sen. Xiong bringing this bill forward.

Electric cooperatives do regular maintenance and upgrades on their infrastructure as they continue to implement Minnesota's clean energy transition and deploy broadband. In doing this they have to cross or parallel more railroad tracks. In 2016 legislation was enacted that established a flat fee of \$1250 utilities would be required to pay to Railroads when crossing or paralleling their rights-of-way. Importantly, no fee is required for utility crossings in public rights-of-way. Nevertheless, Railroads are charging fees for crossings in what should be considered public rights-of-way. This is costing utilities time and money as well as delaying construction in Minnesota's already short construction season.

SF 2687 would prevent Railroads from continuing to assert right-of-way claims in corridors that should properly be considered public rights-of-way.

We appreciate the committee's support of SF 2687.

Sincerely,

Jenny Glumack  
Director of Government Affairs  
Minnesota Rural Electric Association