

### **Critical Wisconsin Transmission Bill Needs our Support**

I have discussed in previous editions of this memo an important energy policy measure that would help keep electric transmission costs down for WPPI members. With significant grid expansions planned across our region, some out-of-state entities are greatly interested in owning this new infrastructure in Wisconsin. They are lobbying heavily for the right to do so. Fighting back on this is clearly in the best interest of the communities WPPI serves, which is why we are actively advocating for the “Right of First Refusal” (ROFR) in Senate Bill 28 / Assembly Bill 25.

### ***Keeping Costs Down for Your Customers***

ROFR would ensure that incumbent utilities such as American Transmission Company – in which WPPI is a partial owner – have the first opportunity to own the new projects in their footprint. This matters greatly for our ability to keep wholesale power costs down for our members.



The savings provided to our members because of WPPI’s participation as a transmission owner through ATC are significant: over the past three years, the return on our investment in ATC has averaged over \$9 million per year. These dollars flow directly back to WPPI members and their customers in the form of lower wholesale power costs. Without ROFR, we will still incur our share of the costs for the new projects not owned by ATC, but we will receive none of the returns that help limit those impacts for customers.

### ***Keeping the Lights On***

ATC is also a trusted, Wisconsin-based partner providing a critical service: safe and reliable bulk delivery of electricity. They are invested in and responsive to Wisconsin communities, businesses, stakeholders and WPPI member utilities. If we have any issues in delivering our generation resources to our load, we know exactly who to call at ATC. Unlike out-of-state entities with no vested interest here beyond a single project, ATC is not here today and gone tomorrow.

ATC should own these projects because they are responsive and collaborative in seeking beneficial outcomes and providing safe and reliable electricity for the long term.

### ***Fighting for Our Communities***

Our active support of ROFR is based on the simple premise that all of Wisconsin – and all WPPI member communities – benefit when ATC owns transmission lines.

At a public hearing on Tuesday, I testified at a joint session of the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Utilities and Tourism and the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities about the indisputable cost savings that this measure would deliver. I've included a link to the recording below.



I suspect that one of the few people with the appetite to watch the entire four-plus hours is Joseph Owen, WPPI's senior director of government affairs. For the rest of us who would prefer the ten-minute take, you can view the testimony from Marshfield Utilities General Manager Nick Kumm and myself by skipping to the 1:18:00 timestamp in the video, which is available here: <https://wiseye.org/2025/03/04/senate-committee-on-utilities-and-tourism-and-assembly-committee-on-energy-and-utilities/>

A signal of how controversial this bill has become is that 11 legislators registered in opposition at the public hearing, which is almost unheard of. All Wisconsin legislators are aware of the bill,

and as you may be able to tell from some of the tone during the hearing, they are tired of hearing about this issue from every lobbyist in Dane County that owns a suit and tie.

➤ *What WPPI Member Utility and Community Leaders Can Do.*

This is not an occasion on which we would ask you to make another call or formal trip to Madison; however, we know that many of you talk to your legislators often as part of more casual interactions in the community. So, should you run into your Wisconsin state senator or assembly representative and have the opportunity, I would encourage you to simply remind them that community-owned utilities like yours strongly support the measure.

**More information**

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**Another Successful APPA Legislative Rally**

Meeting with federal legislators in the nation's capital helps ensure that our elected policymakers keep WPPI member communities' needs in mind as they decide on energy policy issues.

Thank you to the 42 attendees from 22 member communities who attended this year's Annual Legislative Rally of the American Public Power Association.

WPPI member utility and community leaders from Wisconsin, Iowa and Michigan met directly with legislators to discuss tax exempt bonds, ensuring municipally owned utilities have access to the same cost saving mechanisms that for-profit utilities use, streamlining the regulatory backlog on building critical grid infrastructure, and ensuring that tariffs on raw materials don't exacerbate supply chain constraints on distribution transformers.

