



2-23-22



February 21, 2022

Members of the Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee  
700 W Jefferson Street  
Boise, ID 83702

**Subject: SB 1321 enhanced penalties for assault and battery of a public utility worker.**

Dear Chairman Lakey and Members of the Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee:

Idaho's investor-owned and consumer-owned electric utilities strongly urge your "yes" vote to send SB 1321 to the floor with a due pass recommendation.

Idaho's public utility workers are mission-essential, highly skilled employees working 24 hours a day to keep the lights on, our homes heated, and economy energized.

In many instances, public utility workers work hand-in-hand with our traditional first responders, and often serve a first responder role themselves - being required to respond first to a variety of incidents, including structure fires, car-strikes-pole scenarios, and law enforcement actions that require power to be cut, before law enforcement officers or fire fighters can safely do their jobs.

Public utility workers serve an essential public safety role. Whether repairing downed lines, restoring power after a storm, shutting off the gas into a structure fire, or maintaining communication lines, we need our public utility workers to be able to do their jobs unencumbered by threats or violence so they can keep all of us and our communities safe.

There has been a disturbing uptick in assault against our valued employees over the last few years and we hope that the protections provided under SB 1321 can help stem the tide of this abuse.

Please vote "yes" on SB 1321 and feel free to reach out to any of us if you have additional questions.

Will Hart, Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association

Jennifer Visser, Idaho Power Company

Teresa Molitor, Avista Corporation

Russ Westerberg, Rocky Mountain Power