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Commission Vice-Chair

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Members of the House Utilities Committee,

Due to a scheduling conflict, I was unable to attend the House Utilities Committee meeting to publicly express my support for House Bill (HB) 4097, also known as the Oklahoma State Transmission Accountability and Reliability Act (Oklahoma STAR Act). HB 4097 addresses several issues important to me: States' Rights, competition that can yield customer savings, reliability, and accountability for our State's critical infrastructure.

Due to a federal order issued under the Obama/Biden Administration, Oklahoma lost the authority to contain costs associated with certain high-voltage transmission projects prior to those costs being passed on to Oklahoma ratepayers. This oversight, previously held by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC), was stripped away and given to the federal government. The federal order also removed our ability to oversee the reliability and ongoing maintenance and operation of high-voltage transmission assets located in our State. As a Commissioner, I am deeply troubled that unregulated entities can own critical infrastructure in Oklahoma while avoiding answering to the OCC or any other State body for costs or reliability. HB 4097 addresses my concerns by untying our hands and returning crucial oversight to the State to protect ratepayers.

New high-voltage transmission projects should be constructed at the lowest reasonable cost for ratepayers by requiring competitive bidding for construction projects. While a version of competitive bidding exists today under the existing federal regime, HB 4097 moves the process to the State where it will be overseen by an Independent Evaluator appointed by the OCC. This is similar to the long-standing competitive bidding process utilized for generation projects – a process I have seen work successfully for ratepayers during my time on the OCC.

My support of HB 4097 is to protect Oklahoma ratepayers by restoring States' Rights, improving competitive bidding by utilizing a proven State-administered process, and eliminating accountability loopholes created by an Obama/Biden Era process. I look forward to watching this bill progress during this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim David