

11/29/18

Good morning Chairman and House Committee members.

My name is Ronald Byrnes and I represent the members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 352. I am also here today on behalf of many other IBEW Locals who represent Public Utilities and municipal workers in Michigan.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to with you today concerning House Bill 6474.

Local 352 members work for the Lansing Board of Water and Light and supply Lansing and regional residents with clean drinking water, safe reliable electricity, steam heat and chilled water to residential, commercial and industrial customers.

Local 352 and the Utility have a good working relationship in which we meet every day to resolve issues together and for other labor relations issues including employee discipline when necessary and our legal obligation for representation of employees.

Unfortunately House Bill 6474 would dramatically hamper the Public Utilities and the local union's ability to effectively and efficiently deal with issues that arise in a timely manner, especially considering a Utilities 24/7 operation.

In our case, meetings would need to be scheduled after normal business hours and or weekends to deal with issues at hand including grievance meetings, departmental safety committees, departmental training committees, and apprenticeship committees just to name a few. These committees are joint Labor/Management committees that forward the progress of the employer/employee relationship for efficient operations.

IBEW members just like police and fire members who are carved out of this legislation are first responders to natural disasters such as storms that cause power outages and emergencies such as water main breaks. We are on the front line of these events and take serious our obligation to protect the public. We are continuously developing with our management partners, new safety procedures and protocols.

We urge you to oppose this bill, and I appreciate being able to address the committee today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.