



**American  
Public Power  
Association**

Ph: 202.467.2900  
Fax: 202.467.2910  
[www.PublicPower.org](http://www.PublicPower.org)

2451 Crystal Drive  
Suite 1000  
Arlington, VA 22202-4801

May 19, 2015

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

On behalf of the American Public Power Association (APPA), I am writing in support of H.R. 2358, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act introduced by Congressmen Ryan Zinke (R-MT) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR). H.R. 2358 would amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands. This legislation is extremely important to ensuring transmission- and, in some cases, distribution-system reliability and security. As the trade association representing over 2,000 not-for-profit, community owned electric utilities in 49 states, whose purpose is to provide affordable, reliable electricity with the appropriate environmental stewardship, this legislation is particularly welcome to us.

As noted in the Department of Energy's Quadrennial Energy Review (QER), investigations following the August 14, 2003, Northeast blackout revealed that a primary cause of the blackout was flashover caused by inadequate vegetation management (tree pruning and removal). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) found that vegetation management approvals on federally managed rights-of-way are particularly problematic due to permitting and environmental requirements that are inconsistent and time-consuming. In the case of federal lands, the inability of utilities to remove vegetation beyond their easement presents a major obstacle in protecting the electrical infrastructure. Not only must long-reaching tree branches be pruned to avoid contacts with transmission lines, but brush and other ground vegetation must be periodically cleared from the base of transmission towers to minimize the effects of fires.

H.R. 2358 will provide the consistency and flexibility needed by APPA's members to treat danger trees and facilitate access to and clearance of these transmission lines and associated facilities, while also protecting our members from liability when the appropriate federal government agencies fail to allow our members the ability to manage the vegetation in and around the electricity rights-of-way. Additionally, the legislation will seek to develop a program to train the appropriate federal employees in vegetation management practices and procedures to prevent the problems laid out by FERC.

The Honorable Rob Bishop

Page 2

5/19/2015

We understand that you, along with Reps. Zinke and Schrader are committed to seeing this legislation reach President Obama's desk to be signed into law. Thank you for your efforts and we look forward to continuing our work together on this legislation as you move through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan N. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, vertical tail on the letter "y".

Susan N. Kelly  
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources