



# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

## *Senate Bill 341*

October 31, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on Senate Bill 341.

Last session, the Legislature passed 2011 Act 53 to remove the permit requirement and clarify the regulations related to the transportation of poles and pipes by cooperatives and utilities. While these changes have been generally beneficial to utilities, the bill had an unintended consequence of deleting a long-standing exemption under the permit dealing with the front and side overhang on certain vehicles.

In order to balance the load or prevent these poles from dragging on the ground behind the vehicle, utilities will often load the pole such that it extends more than three feet beyond the front of the vehicle, which current law generally prohibits. Similarly, the special carriage used to carry the poles on the truck may extend beyond the right fender of the vehicle. These allowances were built into the pole and pipe permit prior to 2011, however they were not recreated in statute when the permit was eliminated.

This bill simply restores the provisions that were inadvertently deleted in 2011 Act 53. Specifically, the bill will once more allow cooperatives and utilities transporting poles and pipes to carry a load extending no more than ten feet beyond the front fender and six inches beyond the right fender.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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Public Hearing Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013

Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs

Testimony of Beata Kalies, Cooperative Network

In support of 2013 SB 341 relating to projecting loads on vehicles transporting poles and pipe

Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Beata Kalies, Director of Government Relations, Cooperative Network, representing electric cooperatives in Wisconsin.

Act 53 of the 2011 legislative session eliminated the requirement for an annual or consecutive-month Dept. of Transportation permit to haul materials such as poles or pipe on a utility vehicle and set the maximum length of a single vehicle used for this purpose at 60 feet, or 120 for a two-vehicle combination.

These provisions were welcome, but repealing the permit requirement inadvertently eliminated an established exemption which allowed transport of materials that protrude beyond the front of the vehicle for load balancing.

Thus current law prohibits operating a vehicle more than eight and-a-half feet wide and transporting a load extending more than three feet beyond the front of the vehicle.

Senate Bill 341 corrects the unintended consequence by restoring the provisions allowing maximum frontal projection of 10 feet and a maximum vehicle width of nine feet including a maximum 6" right-side load projection.

For electric co-ops and other utilities, the ability to transport poles in this fashion was common practice for decades. In certain situations and rural conditions, such as remote right-of-way areas, construction zones and while responding to weather related outages, crews are not able to use a pole trailer.

These changes are supported by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and are not known to be controversial.

Thank you for considering this legislation and support of the bill.







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