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LD 810

This is supplemental testimony to my original testimony regarding LD 810.

1) As discussed during today's Public Hearing, Representative Kessler indicated that the legislature should not need to separately give final approval to a high-impact transmission line if the State was the party that proposed the high-impact transmission line. He suggested that the legislature does not have the technical expertise to be making a final decision on whether a high-impact transmission line should, or should not, approved, and indicated that partisan politics can play a role in the decision-making process and that the legislature should be a policy setting authority only. Yet when it comes to a high-impact transmission line not proposed by the State, it appear his thought process is that the legislature should retain control over the decision-making process. This suggests that the legislature is somehow less qualified to approve a high-impact transmission line proposed by the State and more qualified to approve one that isn't proposed by the State. I fail to follow the logic to that argument. The members of the legislature are certainly not subject experts on all matters that come before it. This is why legislative committees are formed, in order to become subject matter experts and to inform their colleagues. If someone is on a committee who feels that they aren't a subject matter expert, then they should work hard to become one, or step down from that committee and allow someone else to do so.

2) If the majority of the EUT committee and legislature feels that overriding the will of the voters, by eliminating the need for the legislature to grant final approval of a State initiated high-impact transmission line, is what the will of the voters is today, then present that as a ballot question for the voters to decide. The legislature is voted in by the will of the people and if a voter approved referendum is to be overturned, in whole or in part, then the legislature should be respectful and let the voters decide this, as the voters were the one who originally approved it, not the legislature. As a reminder to all, the legislature serves at the will of the voters, not the other way around.