

Hobbs Ranch, 1655 D Road, Penokee, KS

Before the Senate Utilities Committee

Testimony in Opposition to SB 209

Provided by Terry Hobbs, Trustee

Western Cooperative Electric Association, Inc.

March 15, 2017

Written Only

Good afternoon Chairman Olson and Members of the Committee, my name is Terry Hobbs, and I serve on the board of trustees for Western Cooperative Electric, headquartered in WaKeeney, Kansas.

I live in Graham County, Kansas and was elected to the board in 1993 and have received the Board Leadership Certificate and completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director training from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The coursework required to receive the certification assures that trustees like me understand issues in the areas that impact our electric cooperative including policies for legal, human resources, service delivery and financial responsibility.

As a trustee of our cooperative I am one of 9 people charged with developing the policies that govern our cooperative. We are all democratically elected by the members of the cooperative – those people who take service from Western. It is the responsibility of the board of trustees to assure that we are identifying policies and business practices that allow us to provide the best service at the lowest possible cost. As a member of the community, I am often in a situation to hear from my members when they have questions about the operation of the cooperative. I have yet to have a member ask me about providing retail wheeling or an unbundled bill.

Western recently installed new meters that allows customers to receive detailed information on their bill. As you can see, this format, as well as our online services, allow the member to understand the components of their bill and their usage. We also have information available online to help members understand how to be more efficient with the energy they use. For those members that do not use the internet, our customer service staff members can work with them over the phone to answer questions about the service they receive from their cooperative. I've attached a copy of the information in our monthly magazine that educates our members about the new bill format, online resources, the smart phone applications, and how to read the new bill.

As I watch and read the news, I often hear complaints about the large bureaucracy of our government. SB 209 is an example of unnecessary government intrusion in a matter best handled by the locally elected trustees of the electric cooperative. We are committed to providing our members the best service, information, and accountability as we provide services vital to the success of our members.