

Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board

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HOUSE UTILITIES COMMITTEE

H.B. 2461

Testimony on Behalf of the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board

By David Springe, Consumer Counsel

February 16, 2005

Chairman Holmes and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on H.B. 2461. The Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board supports this bill for the following reasons:

It is CURB's understanding that this bill seeks to create a more seamless approach to the process of declaring an emergency condition, so that utility line crews will be exempted from the limitation on hours of service when necessary.

In the event of a utility emergency, like a natural gas leak or repairing service after a storm, it is often imperative that the line crews be able to remain on station and to complete repairs to restore service to, or protect the safety of, the residential and small commercial customers that CURB represents.

From a policy perspective, CURB believes that government rules and regulations should operate in a manner that aids in, and does not hinder, the work that needs to be done in emergency situations. To that end, the establishment of a seamless, and easy to use process, like that proposed in this bill, would seem to be in the interest of the state, and certainly in the interest of utility customers.

Based on this understanding of the bill, CURB supports this intent, and supports this bill.