



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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### **Tired of Living in the Dark?** **Sen. Chris Koster Introduces Electrical Utility Responsibility Act**

JEFFERSON CITY - Sen. Chris Koster (R-Harrisonville) gave voice today to the anger of hundreds of thousands of Missouri utility customers fed up with living in the dark. Sen. Koster introduced the Electrical Utility Responsibility Act of 2007 in the Missouri Senate. The legislation demands acceptable service levels and performance transparency from Missouri's multi-billion dollar electrical service monopolies.

"When a utility monopoly fails to maintain adequate tree trimming and line maintenance, they can't blame the resulting power outages solely on Mother Nature. Their maintenance policies have courted danger in pursuit of higher profits, and Missouri's utility customers have paid the price for their bad choices," said Sen. Koster.

The Electrical Utility Responsibility Act changes the landscape for utility monopolies in five ways:

1. The Act creates a minimum standard for service reliability that utility monopolies must meet or face significant financial penalties. Utility companies that fail to meet these standards could be forced to reduce electrical rates tens of millions of dollars, all of which would be returned to the pockets of Missouri customers.
2. The Act rebates to customers the monthly service connection charge, approximately \$10 per month, each and every time a customer experiences more than 4 hours of downed service in a given month.

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3. The Act mandates that the Missouri Public Service Commission rank the various utility monopolies for reliability and customer service. For the first time, Missouri consumers will be able to compare various utility companies to one another across a variety of industry metrics.
4. The Act mandates that companies providing substandard electrical service be publicly identified for their poor service. Substandard service providers will be forced to maintain such designation until such time as the provider again complies with industry standards.
5. The Act mandates that the Missouri Public Service Commission promulgate rules for vegetation management by the utility monopolies, and financially penalize companies that fail to follow the PSC tree trimming guidelines.

“One Missouri utility company has recently seen an 11% growth in stock price and enjoyed record-breaking profits, even as they repeatedly left hundreds of thousands of customers in the dark for days and days on end,” Koster noted. “Only a monopoly can get away with such behavior without fearing the consequences of their customer's discontent. This legislation will add modest, healthy, and necessary market forces to Missouri's multi-billion dollar retail energy equation.”

“The monopoly status of these regulated utilities has been bestowed by the people of Missouri. How is it possible that companies that can't keep the lights on make record profits and pay unprecedented dividends? Why in the world should Missourians sit in the dark while shareholders divert money that should clearly be invested in infrastructure?” Koster asked.

The legislation proposed by Senator Koster will be sent to committee for hearing later this week.

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