



January 23, 2023

Representative Zack Stephenson
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for HF 393 – Utility complaint dispute resolution

Dear Representative Stephenson:

I write to express the Citizens Utility Board's support for HF 393, which provides a right of appeal to consumers with legal disputes regarding their utilities. Thank you for carrying this bill.

As an advocate for utility consumers, the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota (CUB) fairly frequently refers individuals to the Consumer Affairs Office (CAO) of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. CAO staff accept consumer complaints and help to mediate solutions – for example, finding agreeable terms for bill repayment arrangements or resolving disputes about electricity or natural gas service. As far as we are aware, the CAO staff are generally able to find a resolution that satisfies the complainant.

However, in the cases when the CAO staff does not resolve an issue to a consumer's satisfaction, we understand that the consumer has no legal avenue to pursue their complaint further. Your bill remedies that procedural dead end by providing a right of appeal to the Commission itself – and further through the courts, if warranted.

While we do not expect that such appeals will be necessary very often, it is critical that Minnesotans have a right to appeal decisions regarding critical and legally protected utility services.

Thank you for carrying this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annie Levenson-Falk'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Annie Levenson-Falk
Executive Director