

IBEW LOCAL 292



Fed IJJA, IRA testimony, HF 1656 House Energy Committee

February 15, 2023

Thank you, Chair Acomb and members of the House Energy Committee, for inviting us to speak today. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers represents and helps to train, in partnership with the contractors we work for, 14,000 electrical workers in the state of Minnesota. We train electrical workers, in cooperation with our industry partners at no cost to the taxpayers. We also partner with several community workforce readiness programs to promote our industry and prepare applicants in an interest towards our programs in the electrical industry. (*Building Strong Communities, Construction Careers Foundation, Studio 180, through their Lake Street Works program, Helmets to Hard Hats, CTUL*)

Seeing the Federal IJJA and the IRA is a historic win for the IBEW and working families across the country and certainly here in Minnesota. This legislation will create NEW union jobs, lower energy costs and help to curb the climate crisis. It is vitally important to see to it that the Minnesota Legislature partners with the initiatives outlined in the Federal Legislation as well as provide the matching funding to capture those Federal Funds. We support HF 1656 to help get this done.

The (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IJJA), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) brings together energy savings and renewable energy initiatives with provisions to create high paying and good benefited careers for working families. Something we at the IBEW have been working on for many years. Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, tackling Climate Change should, and now WILL, equal Good Jobs and Great careers.

Thank you to the US members of Congress and the Biden administration for ensuring that we are creating careers in this industry by including the provisions of Prevailing Wage, Apprenticeship training standards and Local hiring practices in this legislation. Working together to include these standards is how we promote careers in this industry that are diverse and inclusive for all working families. Provision in these Acts also help to create and strengthen existing, career path training programs into the electrical industry to reach into those communities which have been traditionally disadvantaged to make sure that everyone has an

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opportunity to be exposed to and learn a trade for a career in this exciting energy transformation. We call on the Minnesota Legislature to join the efforts to forward the principles extended by this Federal legislation and take steps to create the matching funds needed to capture these federal funds.

Specific to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs act; the state of Minnesota is eligible for \$65 million in funding for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure throughout the state, the MN Department of Transportation has already put together the required EV infrastructure plan and we are awaiting the commitment of the state matching funds to bring the \$65 million in federal funds to our state. This plan puts Electricians to work. EV infrastructure is the work we train for and perform. We are anxious to get to work. The US Department of Transportation has issued guidance on the requirements for spending on these projects to include the EVITP (Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program) certification for contractors and electricians who work on these projects. This program assures the highest quality of training for those installing and maintaining this Electric Vehicle infrastructure. I would encourage Minnesota legislation as a requirement of funding to strengthen this language specifically to an EVITP trained workforce. The IBEW has been training electricians through this program for 2 years now, we are ready to get to work!

In addition to Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, the IJA also puts Millions towards work to modernize the electric grid, repairing, upgrading and expanding the vital electric delivery infrastructure in the state to meet the demand of new renewable energy sources to be connected to the grid, Put Millions towards broadband networking to provide faster communication in even the most remote areas and dedicates Millions to improving the Nations rail infrastructure; this includes funding for passenger service to Duluth and improved service to Chicago. The funding and initiative for these vital infrastructure projects will provide direct job creation for IBEW Lineworkers, Rail workers, Construction Electricians and Limited Energy Workers.

Thank you again Chair Acomb and Committee Members for allowing us to speak today and I am happy to answer any questions today. We are here to help to see this critical funding matching achieved as soon as possible in this legislative year, this is an IBEW Priority for the 2023 Session.

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