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Protect Free-market Principles — Stop Right of First Refusal Bill AB 174 in Wisconsin

Members of the Wisconsin Legislature are seeking to enact legislation that would severely limit utility competition, raising electricity rates for millions of Wisconsinites.

Assembly Bill 174 (AB 174), described as a "Right of First Refusal" (ROFR) bill, has been introduced in the Legislature. If enacted, it would adopt a "right of first refusal" for incumbent public utilities to build transmission projects, effectively giving them a monopoly over such projects.

As the 2024 Wisconsin *Legislative Scorecard* reported on a previous iteration of AB 174:

> This bill ends competitive bidding of new and large-scale multi-billion-dollar transmission projects in Wisconsin, granting exclusive control over the state's electric grid to existing public utilities, further expanding their monopolies. Removing the benefits of competition and restricting access to utility providers will result in higher electricity rates and less reliable service, harming both families and businesses. Rather than contribute to Wisconsin's energy inflation and threatening its industries through corrupt, corporate-sponsored protectionism, the Legislature should encourage competition and free-market enterprise, which spur innovation and create cost-savings for customers.

AB 174 violates the very purpose of government. As the Declaration of Independence makes clear, governments are established to "to secure these rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Regulating the market and choosing economic winners and losers are not the purpose of government.

Contact your state representative and senator, and urge them to oppose AB 174 and instead protect limited government and the free market.