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Sloan Testifies on Assembly Bill 583 in Madison

Barron Electric Cooperative's General Manager Dallas Sloan recently provided testimony on Assembly Bill 583, introduced by State Representative Romaine Quinn and cosponsored by Senator Janet Bewley, to create a sales and use tax exemption for services furnished by one electric cooperative or telecommunications utility to another under a declared state of emergency. Dallas explained, "In 2017, Barron Electric experienced a difficult year of storms. Our total outage hours increased 132% over the previous four-year average. During the May 16 tornado, nearly 9,000 members were without power, which is just under 50% of our membership. Given the magnitude of this outage, Barron Electric employed the help of seven other utilities and two contractors to restore power. Barron Electric paid outside crews over \$120,000 for labor and equipment, plus nearly \$7,000 in sales and use tax. These outside crews worked side by side with our crews, yet we are not required to pay sales and use tax on our crews." Dallas commented, "We appreciate Representative Quinn introducing this bill and Senator Bewley's support, as well as their support of electric cooperatives. The cooperative is looking out for the best interests of our members. Public safety and power restoration are the top priorities." Representative Quinn's work on this bill will ultimately help save all rural electric cooperative members money.

All Wisconsin electric cooperatives will benefit from this bill. Nate Steines, Director of Operations, commented, "We are fortunate to have Wisconsin's ROPE (Restoration of Power in an Emergency) program, which allows crews from other cooperatives to help restore power during large outages." When an electric cooperative uses ROPE, the cooperative using these services has to pay a sales tax for the additional help; this bill will eliminate this tax.
