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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

For Immediate Release
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Van Roy Bill Becomes Law:

Legislation takes a shot at curbing vandalism against utilities' infrastructure

MADISON – Assembly Bill 748, which prohibits shooting at power and telecommunications infrastructure, was signed into law today. The bill, authored by Rep. Karl Van Roy (R-Howard), also provides penalties for those who shoot at and damage the lines and equipment.

“I applaud Governor Doyle for recognizing the importance of this legislation and appreciate his signing it into law,” said Van Roy. “Ratepayers will no longer foot the bill for these acts of vandalism.”

According to Wisconsin Public Services (WPS), each time a power line is shot and damaged, it costs an average of \$40,000 to fix; that amount was inevitably passed onto consumers. The advent of dove hunting in Wisconsin exacerbated the problem as individuals often shot at birds roosting on the lines, precipitating a greater number of incidents and, subsequently, more cost in damage to the infrastructure. Individuals have also been known to use telecommunications infrastructure for shooting practice.

“Previously, utilities had very little recourse to recover the costs of damage to their lines, and ratepayers got stuck with the bill,” said Van Roy. “Now, the one who takes the shot will pay the price.”

Under the new law, individuals who shoot at and damage the lines will face a small fine, have their hunting licenses revoked for one year, and pay restitution for the actual cost of the damage caused.

“I greatly appreciate Sen. Robert Cowles work as the lead author of this bill in the Senate,” Van Roy added. “Together, we have done our part to protect peoples’ power lines and their pocket books.”

The bill was overwhelmingly supported by utilities, telecommunications, sporting groups, and electrical worker’s unions.

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