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# ADAM JARCHOW

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on **SB 284** – Relating to: methods of voting by members of a cooperative  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 – 10:00 am

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB 284.

First, I will give you a little bit of background on this bill and why it is important to cooperatives in Wisconsin. This bill was brought to our office by the cooperatives themselves. This is a change that they welcome and feel would aid in their mission.

In 2010, Act 387 allowed for members of cooperatives to vote electronically in cooperative elections to vote on motions. However, a drafting error excluded electronic voting in the elections for the election or removal of directors of a cooperative. By making this simple fix to the law, it allows a member of a cooperative, if they so choose, to vote in all elections electronically.

To be clear, this is not a mandate nor a suggestion that cooperatives use electronic voting in their director elections, however it is just another option, which under current law, is illegal.

I hope that you would agree and support this bill to fix the current law to make it work as it was intended.



# TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23<sup>RD</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

**From: Senator Terry Moulton**

**To: Committee on Natural Resources and Energy**

**Re: Testimony regarding Senate Bill 284**  
**Relating to:** methods of voting by members of a cooperative

**Date: October 13, 2015**

Chairman Cowles and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Senate Bill 284. The electric cooperatives asked Representative Jarchow and I to introduce this bill to clarify language about electronic voting for the co-ops.

2010 Act 387 allowed electronic voting via email or online in cooperative elections. However, the placement of the statutory language only allows for electronic voting for committee motions, but not for the election or removal of board directors.

Currently cooperative board elections take place at annual meetings and voting is done in-person; some cooperatives provide mail-in ballots for absentee members. Senate Bill 284 gives cooperatives and their members the option of amending their bylaws to include a third option - voting online for board directors.

Under the bill, an absent member would be able to vote in a director election via email or online through a program designed to facilitate such a process. The cooperative would be able to authenticate that it is a member who is casting a vote as members would be provided a login ID and password. The State of Minnesota already has a similar law in place.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to testify today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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