



## Oppose SB2120

Sponsor - Senator Carole Pankau

SB2120 amends the Public Utilities Act to disallow all/any tree planting under overhead electrical power lines and provide the electric utility the authority to remove any and all trees in violation of this act. This bill has many potential faults and could be devastating to community greening initiatives.

- This law would supersede any existing franchise agreement, municipal ordinance or property owner rights. With such authority over utility easements why would any electrical utility consider underground as a better option.
- The bill does not clearly define what is considered to be “under” overhead power lines. Does this mean this zone is limited to the utility easement or not. And then if it does limit control to the utility easement will electrical companies seek wider easements in the future?
- **What is considered a tree?** Does this mean all woody plant material? Many trees can be considered shrubs and visa versa.
- **What about pre existing trees?** Installation of new overhead utilities rarely cuts across treeless sections of populated areas. Do these utility zones become off limits to trees? When the existing trees decline and are removed, considering they cannot be replaced, what about the lost value to the community or property owner, and what about the lost environmental and economic benefits of those mature trees?
- Street trees and overhead utilities are a common combination in thriving communities and many times provide a positive image for the community. Utility friendly trees and even professionally trimmed shade trees take the attention away from the industrial appearance of overhead power lines. These handsome combinations would be greatly impacted when these areas become tree free. Some **communities would lose a majority of their tree lined streets** once these trees were removed due to decline. Considering that the average life span of an urban tree is 10 to 15 years it wouldn't be long before the change in community appearance would start to become evident.
- Tree decline would lead to tree removal and tree free areas so does this reduce incentive for electrical utilities to follow acceptable arboricultural tree trimming practices?

Overhead electrical lines and community tree conflicts are noted in historic archives as far back as the early 1900s. Communities, utilities and tree experts have designed many workable solutions since to minimize the detrimental effects these overhead lines have on existing tree populations. When these solutions are practiced, overhead power lines and community trees can coexist and do