



Keep Utility Jobs Local:

Strengthen NIPSCO Staffing, Reliability, and Storm Response for Northern Indiana

To:

- Governor Mike Braun
- Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)
- Indiana General Assembly
- Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC)
- Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO)
- Local Mayors and County Commissioners
- State and Federal Representatives Serving Northern Indiana

Petition Statement

We, the undersigned residents, business owners, elected officials, labor organizations, and community stakeholders of Northern Indiana, call upon state regulators, policymakers, and utility leadership to **prioritize investment in a robust local utility workforce** that can effectively serve our communities, maintain critical infrastructure, and respond rapidly during emergencies.

Reliable electric and natural gas service is not a luxury. It is a public necessity essential for public safety, economic development, healthcare, education, and quality of life.

Recent severe weather events have demonstrated the importance of having adequately staffed local crews who know our communities, understand our infrastructure, and can be deployed quickly when outages occur. As aging infrastructure, population growth, economic development, and increasingly severe weather place greater demands on the utility system, Northern Indiana must ensure that the utility workforce is prepared to meet those challenges.

We Call For:

1. Increase Local Frontline Staffing to Meet Approved Regulatory Levels

We urge NIPSCO to hire and retain additional local lineworkers, gas technicians, service personnel, vegetation management professionals, underground crews, dispatchers, and other frontline utility workers throughout Northern Indiana.

2. Strengthened Storm Response Capabilities

We call for greater investment in year-round emergency preparedness, staging locations, mutual aid coordination, training, and local response resources to ensure rapid restoration following storms and other emergencies.

3. Commitment to Permanent Skilled Workforce Development

We support expanded apprenticeship programs, partnerships with local unions, technical schools, community colleges, and workforce development organizations to create long-term career opportunities for Hoosiers.

4. Prioritization of Local Workers and Contractors

Whenever possible, utility work should be performed by qualified local employees and established regional contractors with demonstrated commitments to safety, training, accountability, and community engagement.

5. Increased Transparency

We request public reporting regarding: Frontline staffing levels, Vacancy rates, Average storm restoration performance, Contractor utilization, Workforce development investments

6. Regulatory Oversight Focused on Reliability

We encourage the IURC and other relevant state agencies to ensure that workforce adequacy and emergency response readiness remain key considerations in regulatory proceedings affecting utility customers

Our Concerns

We believe excessive reliance on temporary, out-of-state, or transient contractors can create challenges related to local knowledge, accountability, long-term workforce development, and institutional experience.

While outside assistance can be valuable during major emergencies, Northern Indiana communities deserve a strong permanent workforce that lives in our communities, pays taxes in our communities, and remains available year-round to protect the infrastructure upon which residents and businesses depend. NIPSCO currently is below budgeted staffing levels in many departments leading to longer response times.

This petition is not an attack on mutual-aid crews that assist during emergencies. Rather, it is a call for greater investment in permanent local staffing and workforce development that strengthens reliability before emergencies occur. Moreover, dollars spent on a regular workforce increases investment in our communities and can lower cost compared to out of state transient workforces.

Why This Matters

A strong utility workforce means:

- Faster outage restoration
- Improved public safety
- Greater reliability for hospitals and emergency services
- Stronger economic development
- Better support for manufacturing and industry
- Faster response to gas and electric emergencies
- More family-supporting jobs for Indiana workers
- Enhanced resilience against severe weather and future grid challenges
- Lower cost for rate payers

Call to Action

We respectfully ask Governor Braun, the Indiana General Assembly, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, the Office of Utility Consumer Counselor, and local elected officials to:

1. *Assess current utility staffing needs.*
2. *Develop workforce growth targets.*
3. *Support utility apprenticeship expansion.*
4. *Encourage local hiring and training initiatives.*
5. *Ensure communities receive the level of utility service and emergency preparedness they deserve.*

Northern Indiana's future depends on reliable infrastructure, resilient communities, and a skilled workforce prepared to meet the challenges ahead.

****We stand together in support of stronger utility staffing, stronger communities, and stronger infrastructure.****