**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 58‑1‑70 SO AS TO AUTHORIZE SOUTH CAROLINA MUNICIPALITIES TO CONTRACT WITH PROPERLY LICENSED, CERTIFIED, AND INSURED PUBLIC UTILITY-ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS OR MECHANICAL-ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS TO BURY OR UNDERGROUND EXISTING OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL POWER TRANSMISSION LINES LOCATED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE MUNICIPALITY, AND TO REQUIRE ELECTRIC UTILITIES AND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OPERATING IN THIS STATE TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH MUNICIPALITIES THAT SEEK TO BURY OR UNDERGROUND EXISTING OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL POWER TRANSMISSION LINES PURSUANT TO THIS ACT.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 58 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 58‑1‑70. (A)(1) Notwithstanding another provision of law, in lieu of utilizing the municipality’s servicing electric utility or electric cooperative to bury or underground overhead electrical power transmission lines, a municipality may contract with a properly licensed, certified, and insured public utility-electrical contractor or a mechanical-electrical contractor to bury or underground existing overhead electrical power transmission lines located within the boundaries of the municipality.

(2) The appropriate contracting officer for a municipality that utilizes a public utility-electrical contractor or a mechanical-electrical contractor to bury or underground existing overhead electrical power transmission lines pursuant to this subsection shall certify in writing that the public utility-electrical contractor or mechanical-electrical contractor selected to perform the work is properly licensed, certified, and insured in accordance with all state and local laws and regulations.

(B) Electric utilities and electric cooperatives operating in this State shall cooperate fully with any municipality that seeks to bury or underground existing overhead electrical power transmission lines pursuant to subsection (A).”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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