

478.1 Franchise.

1. A person shall not construct, erect, maintain, or operate a transmission line, wire, or cable that is capable of operating at an electric voltage of sixty-nine kilovolts or more along, over, or across any public highway or grounds outside of cities for the transmission, distribution, or sale of electric current without first procuring from the utilities commission a franchise granting authority as provided in [this chapter](#).

2. A franchise shall not be required for electric lines constructed entirely within the boundaries of property owned by a person primarily engaged in the transmission or distribution of electric power or entirely within the boundaries of property owned by the end user of the electric power.

3. If the transmission line, wire, or cable is capable of operating only at an electric voltage of less than sixty-nine kilovolts, no franchise is required. However, the utilities commission shall retain jurisdiction over all such lines, wires, or cables.

4. A person who seeks to construct, erect, maintain, or operate a transmission line, wire, or cable that will operate at an electric voltage of less than sixty-nine kilovolts outside of cities and that cannot secure the necessary voluntary easements to do so may petition the commission pursuant to [section 478.3, subsection 1](#), for a franchise granting authority for such construction, erection, maintenance, or operation, and for the use of the right of eminent domain.

5. Notwithstanding any other provision of [this chapter](#), if an existing transmission line, wire, or cable is operating at thirty-four and one-half kilovolts, it may be franchised, rebuilt, and upgraded to be capable of operation at sixty-nine kilovolts using an abbreviated franchise process if the upgraded line will meet required safety standards, will be on substantially the same right-of-way, and will have substantially the same effect on the underlying properties. The abbreviated franchise process shall not require published notice or a public informational meeting. The commission may adopt rules defining relevant terms, setting forth the steps of the abbreviated process, and specifying the requirements for the petition and landowner notification. The petitioner shall provide written notice concerning the anticipated construction to the last known address of the owners of record of the property where construction will occur and to the parties residing on such property. The franchise may be granted if the commission finds the upgraded line is necessary to serve a public use and represents a reasonable relationship to an overall plan of transmitting electricity in the public interest. The franchise shall not become effective until the petitioner has paid, or agreed to pay, all costs and expenses of the franchise proceeding specified in [section 478.4](#).

[S13, §1527-c, 2120-n; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §8309; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §489.1; C77, 79, 81, §478.1]

[84 Acts, ch 1101, §2](#); [94 Acts, ch 1136, §1](#); [97 Acts, ch 113, §1](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1048, §1, 5](#); [2009 Acts, ch 66, §1, 2](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §2688](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

Referred to in [§478.31](#)

Authorization in cities, [§364.2](#)