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CLARENCE W. HAWKINS  
MAYOR

August 22, 2000

FMCSA-97-2350-20868

The Honorable Rodney Slater  
Secretary, U. S. Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
00 SEP 20 AM 11:42

Dear Mr. Slater:

Recently the U.S. Department of Transportation has proposed rules that cause me great concerns for the safety of my fellow citizens. As the mayor of The City of Bastrop, Louisiana, I am responsible for the safety of the residents in my community. And as drafted, the USDOT rules would restrict the hours that utility company service drivers can operate during an emergency.

I believe utility workers should get the same exemptions the department proposes for police and firefighters. In our town, utility workers are a vital key to meeting the needs of our emergency services. The men and women of our power company protect our homes from power outages, keep our children safe when an accident downs power lines and allows the fire department to quickly contain and control fires.

Earlier this year when a devastating ice storm struck our town, thousands of our citizens lost power and were in danger of suffering from extreme cold. This emergency truly endangered the lives of children and the elderly alike and it was the utility employees that worked day and night to restore the power and heat to our homes.

To restrict the hours of operations for utilities is a grave mistake. I urge the USDOT to exempt utility workers as it exempts other necessary emergency personnel.

Sincerely,  
  
Clarence W. Hawkins,  
Mayor, City of Bastrop

Cc: Senator John Breau  
Senator Mary Landrieu  
U. S. Congressman John Cooksey