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Representative James O'Day Files Legislation in Response to National Grid Lockout

H.D.4975 would limit National Grid's public funding and continue to provide health insurance to its workers until a bargain is made

Boston, MA, July 18, 2018 – Representative James O'Day of the 14th Worcester District filed H.D. 4975 – *An Act Relative to the Employment of Certain Workers by National Grid* – to provide protections to members of United Steelworkers (“USW”) Local Union 12003 and USW Local Union 12012 affected by the current bargaining lockout by National Grid.

On June 24th, 2018 National Grid locked out 1,200 members of USW Local Union 12003 and USW Local Union 12012 after both the company and steel unions could not come to an agreement during contract negotiations on health care plans and pensions for new hires. Due to the lockout, National Grid is outsourcing skilled work to out of state contractors, which can endanger Massachusetts residents and the workers themselves if inexperienced or improperly trained.

“These USW members do critical work maintaining the natural gas lines for homes, schools, and businesses across parts of Massachusetts and are constantly working under hazardous conditions,” stated Representative O'Day. “The spirit of our labor law is to encourage bargaining until an agreement has been reached. To walk away from the table is unacceptable. For the safety of workers and Massachusetts residents, I hope that this bill will encourage National Grid to come back to the table and negotiate a fair contract with these 1,200 employees.”

H.D. 4975 is an emergency law that would encourage contract bargaining between National Grid and the steel unions by imposing several protections and restrictions for the duration of the lockout. Under this legislation, National Grid would not have access to public funds for its maintenance work, and the department of public utilities would be prohibited from approving a rate increase for consumer gas or electric distribution, or providing any rebate or rate relief, to National Grid. Additionally, this bill would require National Grid to continue to provide health insurance to workers represented by United Steelworkers Locals 12003 and 12012 and employed by National Grid. Once the lockout is resolved, all limits and restrictions would be repealed.

Representative O'Day is committed to supporting the union workers involved and plans to closely monitor this issue.

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