FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Council unanimous in adopting files to address thefts of city-owned copper wire

Brazen thefts of city-owned copper wire used in supplying electric power to streetlights have touched neighborhoods across the City of Milwaukee, and **Wednesday (November 4)** the Common Council voted unanimously in support of legislation meant to nip the destructive and dangerous criminal activity in the bud.

The full Council on Wednesday unanimously approved the following files meant to address the surge in thefts of copper electrical wire used in the city's streetlighting infrastructure:

- Council file **#260817** – sponsored by **Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs** – directing the Department of Public Works to collaborate with the Milwaukee Police Department and other relevant City departments, organizations and individuals to identify and evaluate measures to prevent electrical wire theft from City-owned infrastructure. The file was co-sponsored by Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt, joined by Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderwoman Larresa Taylor, Alderman Alex Brower, Alderman Robert Bauman, and Alderman Lamont Westmoreland.
- Council file **#260819** – Also sponsored by **Alderwoman Coggs** – directing DPW to establish a reward program for individuals who provide information relating to the theft of electrical wires. Both files are co-sponsored by Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt. This file was also co-sponsored by Alderwoman Pratt, joined by Alderwoman Taylor, Alderman Alex Brower, Alderman Bauman, and Alderman Westmoreland.
- Council file **#260734** – sponsored by **Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II** – increasing fines for the theft or destruction of copper cables or wires. The file was co-sponsored by Alderwoman Coggs, joined by Alderwoman Taylor, Alderman Alex Brower, Alderman Bauman, and Alderman Westmoreland.

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Copper wire theft files/ADD ONE

The primary sponsors of the legislation, Alderwoman Coggs, chair of the Public Works Committee, and Alderman Stamper, chair of the Community and Economic Development Committee – and primary cosponsor **Alderwoman Andrea M. Pratt** – said the surge in copper electrical wire thefts put several city neighborhoods in a dangerous position after dark. "The wire thefts have brought lengthy periods of streetlighting service outages to numerous neighborhoods, and is especially striking now with daylight savings time making it dark before 5 p.m.," Alders Coggs, Stamper and Pratt said.

Alderwoman Pratt, whose district and home neighborhood (especially along W. Capitol Dr. and the Rufus King Neighborhood) have been hit hardest by the thefts, said she is thankful for the Council action to combat the problem, which had reached a "fever pitch" within the past few months. "The thieves had hit 75 times in August alone – including one incident where they used a vehicle to yank the wire out from beneath a light pole," she said.

"These thefts have unfortunately become common across the nation, and we are pleased that our colleagues are fully supportive of our efforts to be proactive in trying to prevent the thefts, to bringing harsher punishment to those caught stealing the copper wire, and in helping to track down and apprehend those involved," Alders Coggs, Stamper and Pratt said. "Importantly, we also look forward to the legislation spurring coordination among DPW, Milwaukee Police and others to help identify additional measures to prevent copper wire theft, improve enforcement efforts and reduce associated costs and service disruptions."

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