

September 15, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dan Webster
Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipeline Safety,
and Hazardous Materials
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dina Titus
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipeline Safety,
and Hazardous Materials
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 5301, the Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2025

Dear Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Subcommittee Chairman Webster, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Titus:

The National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA), representing construction contractors, manufacturers, and distributors since 1964, builds and maintains critical underground infrastructure, including water, wastewater, gas, broadband, and electric systems, as well as transportation networks. Our members are dedicated to delivering high-quality work while prioritizing safety and efficiency.

We write to express strong support for H.R. 5301, the “Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2025,” and specifically Section 18 – Excavation Damage Prevention.

Underground utility strikes pose a persistent, costly, and potentially deadly threat to the utility construction industry. NUCA members strive to maintain safe and effective work environments, with damage prevention as a cornerstone of our operations. We endorse the bipartisan measures in Section 18, which promote state adoption of best practices long advocated by the excavation community. These align with findings from the Infrastructure Protection Coalition’s (IPC) 2022 National Report (available at ipcweb.org) and the Common Ground Alliance’s (CGA) annual Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, of which NUCA is a proud member. The IPC report estimates that outdated or poorly enforced state damage prevention laws contribute to \$61 billion in annual losses from waste, inefficiency, and excess costs, plus \$30 billion in direct damages.

Strengthening damage prevention laws is critical to reducing these incidents, protecting lives, and safeguarding infrastructure. H.R. 5301 enhances excavation safety, strengthens existing pipeline infrastructure, and supports the construction of modernized energy distribution systems to meet growing national demands. By mandating robust state-level policies—such as improved utility locating, mandatory 811 call systems, and stricter enforcement—the bill addresses systemic gaps that lead to preventable accidents.

For example, gas pipeline strikes, often caused by inadequate utility marking or failure to notify 811 before digging, can result in explosions, injuries, and service disruptions. In 2023, the CGA reported over 400,000 utility strikes, with incidents disrupting and endangering communities and causing billions in damages. Enhanced laws would ensure timely and accurate utility locates, reducing such risks. Similarly, fiber-optic cable or water line strikes, which can occur due to poor coordination and communication, or a failure to timely and adequately locate nearby underground facilities, disrupt broadband and water services critical for businesses and households. Mandating comprehensive pre-excavation planning and communication protocols would minimize these incidents, preserving connectivity, public health, and economic stability.

NUCA urges swift passage of H.R. 5301 to protect critical infrastructure, enhance safety, and reduce economic losses. Thank you for your leadership on this vital issue.

Sincerely yours,

Zachary Perconti
Vice President of Government Affairs
National Utility Contractors Association

CC:

The Honorable Rep. Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Honorable Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Rep. Brett Guthrie, Chairman, House Committee on Energy & Commerce
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy & Commerce
The Honorable Sen. Ted Cruz, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
The Honorable Sen. Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
Members of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation