



April 18, 2016

The Honorable Jeff Denham  
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Railways, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Denham,

The Power & Communication Contractors Association (PCCA) represents construction contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers that build and repair America's power and communications infrastructure, including electric transmission and distribution lines and substations as well as telephone, fiber optic, and cable television systems. Several PCCA member companies also engage in natural gas pipeline improvements, both at the distribution and transmission levels. PCCA supports the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2016 (HR 4937) but believes language to ensure full participation in the one-call process would substantially improve the legislation.

The bill would require the General Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study on existing damage prevention programs and ways to improve them through technological improvements with regard to locating, mapping, excavation, and communications practices. This study will provide Congress and a range of other stakeholders with current information about ever-improving technologies and practices used to locate and mark pipelines and other underground facilities, a fundamental but often forgotten part of the damage prevention process.

Municipalities generally own/operate water and sewer systems. When they are exempt from one-call membership requirements, they are relieved of their responsibility to locate the sewer mains they operate. Municipal exemptions from one-call membership can contribute to a "cross bore," which is an extremely hazardous intersection of an existing underground facility by a secondary facility or structure, resulting in direct contact that compromises the integrity of either facility or underground structure.

The last pipeline safety reauthorization in 2011 included language that restricts federal damage prevention grant dollars from being allocated to state damage prevention programs that exempt municipalities and their contractors from one-call notification requirements. Unfortunately, the act stopped short of including one-call *membership* as part of that restriction. Because cross bores present hazards with catastrophic ramifications when electrical facilities are involved, PCCA supports language in pipeline safety legislation that would that would apply the same restriction of federal dollars to state programs that exempt municipalities from one-call membership requirements. PCCA strongly supports any amendment to include this provision as an amendment to this year's pipeline bill.

The vast majority of underground utility construction is performed by contractor personnel, not only on pipeline facilities but also on power, broadband and other telecommunications projects. While pipeline infrastructure is not PCCA's primary market, our members rely on a robust damage prevention process, one that ensures full participation by all stakeholders. The GAO study as required by HR 4937 would provide key information about technologies and practices related to pipeline mapping, location and other critical areas critical to damage prevention, but Congress would significantly improve the bill by requiring municipal membership to one-call centers as part of the criteria for obtaining PHMSA grant assistance. We thank you for your leadership and support passage of the pipeline safety bill this year.

Best regards,

Todd Myers

President