

April 17, 2012

Sylwia Przewdziecki
Clerk, Committee on General Government
99 Wellesley St. West Room 1405
Whitney Block, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Ontario Energy Association's (OEA) Board of Directors, we urge you and your colleagues to establish a mandatory, single, one-call utility-line location system that would better protect public and worker health and safety.

The OEA has more than 150 corporate members who represent the full diversity of the energy industry in Ontario – power producers, firms that transport, transmit and deliver natural gas and electricity, marketers and retailers, manufacturers, contractors, service providers, and energy consultants. This issue is of importance to our membership and to all of the 95,000 people who work in Ontario's energy sector.

Public and worker safety is at risk when utility lines such as buried pipelines, electricity and telephone lines, cables or sewer mains are struck or damaged because homeowners, building contractors and other excavators do not obtain their precise location before digging.

In Ontario, excavators are legally required to obtain the location of utility lines before breaking ground. Excavators and homeowners may need to call up to 13 different phone numbers in order to obtain the location of all utility lines in the vicinity of a dig site. Homeowners do not know whom to call, and excavators may take short cuts. As Ontario does not have a single, mandatory one-call location system, the public and workers must independently navigate their way through a complex system.

A single one-call system that requires the participation of all asset owners would solve this problem by providing excavators and homeowners with one simple phone number that they can use to obtain the location of all utility lines before digging. The system is business-friendly, streamlines processes, reduces cost to taxpayers and, most importantly, improves the overall safety of Ontarians.

Such a system should be mandatory for all underground asset owners. Although a voluntary one-call system has been established, a mandatory one-call system would better ensure that companies participate and public and worker safety is better protected. Our sector endorses safety culture and sees the one-call system as a mandatory requirement for all companies involved.

Should you wish to discuss this proposal or require more information, please contact Tina Arvanitis, Vice President, Communications and Stakeholder Relations, OEA at 647.920.3269 or at tarvanitis@energyontario.ca.

Sincerely,



Elise Herzig
President and CEO
Ontario Energy Association

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