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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 4 April 2012

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 4 avril 2012

**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Ontario One Call Act, 2012

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2012 sur Ontario One Call

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Wednesday 4 April 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Mercredi 4 avril 2012

The committee met at 1603 in room 228.

ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR ONTARIO ONE CALL

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. /
Projet de loi 8, Loi sur Ontario One Call Ltd.**The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti):** Good afternoon, folks. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. We're going to get started with deputations on Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd.GREATER TORONTO SEWER AND
WATERMAIN CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION**The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti):** Our first presenter is the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association. Good afternoon. Welcome to the standing committee.**Mr. George DiPede:** Good afternoon.**The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti):** You have 10 minutes for your presentation, five for questions. Any time you don't use will be divided among members of the committee to ask questions. Just start by stating your name for the purposes of our recording Hansard, and whenever you're ready, you can proceed.**Mr. George DiPede:** My name is George DiPede, and I'm the president of the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association. This is Susan McGovern, who is the assistant executive director of the GTSWCA.

Good afternoon, committee clerk, members of provincial Parliament, ladies and gentlemen. Again, my name is George DiPede, and I am the president of the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association. I have been a contractor in the sewer and water main industry for more than 20 years all across the province of Ontario. Again, I'd like to introduce Susan McGovern, who is the assistant executive director of our association.

The GTSWCA, its board of directors and member companies are eager to provide advice and assistance to the committee in support of Bill 8, the Ontario One Call Act. We want to ensure that it is promptly passed and that regulations are drafted and implemented as soon as

possible. It is imperative that the government gets on with legislating a safe working environment for the people of Ontario.

The GTSWCA is focused on ensuring safe, clean drinking water, delivered and disposed through sustainable and reliable water and waste water systems. We have represented the sewer and water main construction industry in the GTA since 1957, representing 55 years of industry experience. We represent over 175 companies and tens of thousands of skilled workers across the GTA, including operators, labourers, engineers and office staff. We encompass the regions of Halton, Peel, York, a portion of Durham, Simcoe county, and of course the city of Toronto. Collectively, this area represents more than five million Ontarians.

The economic benefit our industry brings to Ontario is very substantial.

You will recognize many of our member companies because we work in your backyards, in your subdivisions, on your main streets and alongside municipal roads and provincial highways that you and your families travel on each and every day. And what do we do there? Well, we dig. We dig in order to maintain existing sewers and infrastructure and install new sewer and water infrastructure. What we try our best to do is keep the GTA safe for you, your families and our workers.

As you are aware, our organization is not the only one that recognizes the importance of Bill 8. Throughout the month of April, we understand that many organizations from a variety of sectors will be presenting to this committee in support of this legislation. You will be hearing from the municipal sector, the emergency response sector, telecommunications, hydro, gas, and the entire construction sector. How do we know this? Well, we work with all of these sectors on a daily basis. One thing we have in common is the urgent need for Ontario One Call legislation. We urge you to listen and to act accordingly.

Along with the copies of this presentation, you will find a copy of our association's brochure. Please take a look at the inside middle panel under the section "Support for our Contractors." The first item listed is One Call legislation for mandatory, accurate and timely locates. Why is it there, you ask? Because our 175 member companies and their thousands of skilled trades workers on job sites every day all across the GTA have asked us to make sure Ontario One Call legislation is passed. It is

important for the health and safety of our workers and the general public across the GTA and across Ontario.

A legislated One Call service is of the utmost importance to our industry. There is an estimated \$100 billion in underground infrastructure assets across Ontario, with much of it located in the highly populated GTA. This infrastructure is aging and requires ongoing maintenance, resulting in excavating large areas to perform these repairs. As of right now, our excavators are forced to call up to 13 different numbers in order to safely proceed with a dig. Last year alone there were some 12,000 strikes or assaults to vital underground infrastructure because Ontario excavators were forced to dig without accurate and timely locates, or, in some cases, with non-responsive utility owners.

This work across the GTA is often performed in highly populated areas, and this scenario results in potential safety risks for our workers and the general public. Without this legislation, unnecessary risk to human life is real, and it is unacceptable.

Across the GTA, our member companies work with large and small urban and rural municipalities which are in support of Ontario One Call. The GTA municipalities understand the need for secure and safe communities.

Ontario One Call is needed as a coordinating body of all utilities for private sector contractors to access. Our contractors have job sites all across the GTA and each site has different underground utilities owned by a variety of different companies. As a contractor, it is impossible for us to know how many utilities may be in the area. As a contractor, we do not have access to that type of information. As a contractor, we do not have access to that type of information. As a contractor, a mandatory Ontario One Call system would provide vital information to ensure safe job sites. Ontario One Call would know what utilities are in the area and who needs to be called to provide timely, accurate and safe locates.

1610

The GTSWCA is pleased to see Bill 8 supported by all three parties. We ask all three parties to continue to put aside partisan politics. You have an opportunity before you to quickly pass legislation that will ensure that Ontario families and workers are safe. Please do the right thing and pass Bill 8.

The GTSWCA has four recommendations for the committee:

(1) The GTSWCA is recommending all-party support to move Bill 8 to third reading and royal assent during this session of the Legislature. We are approaching the busy construction season, and we need this legislation passed now to ensure a safer Ontario.

(2) The GTSWCA is recommending that the Ontario One Call system be mandatory. The value of this service is limited by the fact that the participation is not mandatory for the hundreds of entities that own underground assets.

(3) The GTSWCA is recommending timely locates, within 48 hours of calling a utility owner. This is impera-

tive to maintain the flow of work on job sites and to ensure safe working conditions.

(4) The GTSWCA is recommending that the government hold consultations with contractors, utility owners and the municipal sector in order to draft and implement regulations as soon as possible.

The GTSWCA, its board of directors, the 175 member companies and the tens of thousands of employees across the GTA thank the committee for the opportunity to table our support for Ontario One Call. We look forward to working with the government on the development and implementation of the regulations. We look forward to working for a safer Ontario for all.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation. We have a few minutes. The Conservatives are first for questions: Mr. Bailey, go ahead.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to your organization, Mr. DiPede, the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association. Welcome, Ms. McGovern, as well. Thank you for taking the time to appear before the committee today and present.

With 20 years of experience in your background, how many times over 20 years would you have had the opportunity to make calls to try and do locates, and in your experience, what has been your success in the timeliness of having the locates done?

Mr. George DiPede: Well, the frequency is pretty much on a regular basis. Over the years, as we've grown as a company—we have employees who do a lot of it now, but a lot of times we do it ourselves, and the reason we do it ourselves is because we're making at least 13 phone calls to all the different utility owners to try and get these timely locates. Success has been very frustrating—there are certain areas and some utility organizations that are great to deal with and respond in a timely manner. There are a lot that have other policies, who don't necessarily adhere to getting this information out quickly, so it's very frustrating to call. You know, we're supposed to wait seven days, but instead, we're waiting 10, 12, 14, and that's just unacceptable. Then it's a lot of calling and—listen; the people on the other end of the phone, you don't want to yell at them, because they're only doing their job, but the frustrations on our side—and it becomes a bit of a situation that's not conducive to a co-operative environment.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Another question: Before your company can begin an excavation, what would be some of the major problems with locates and locating the infrastructure that you could run into, and does this bill in some way address some of those issues? What would be some of the issues that you would run into? I guess I'd like to know, does this bill go far enough? Would it help and alleviate those issues?

Mr. George DiPede: It definitely puts us in the right direction and is a great help to our industry. Before we start any excavation, we have to have locates; we are not

allowed to dig without locates. The problem is, as we said, it's not one phone call, and the biggest problem is we don't know what's under the ground. We're given a set of drawings; we're given specifications. We have no idea what hydro is there, and if it is hydro, is it Toronto Hydro, Ontario Hydro, Hydro One? Is it Rogers? We don't know all the utilities that are under the ground. We don't have that information, so we try our best. We call the locating companies that we normally call, but we don't have access to that information, so we might not even call the right agency because we don't even know it's there. That's why it has to be mandatory. It has to be mandatory to have everybody participate, have a central system that allows the contractor to do their job—and our responsibility, which is to make that call. We're not—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): I need to stop you there. Thanks. That's great. We just need to move on so we can get all the questions in.

Mr. George DiPede: Sure. I apologize.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Is my time up? Sorry.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): No, it's okay. Mr. Marchese, go ahead.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. DiPede, my name is Marchese.

Mr. George DiPede: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You could easily misconstrue it, couldn't you? It's DiPede, which sounds so beautiful when you say it right.

Mr. George DiPede: You've got the idea.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We support Bill 8. We think all of you are going to say the same thing, I suspect. We argue that this is something that needs to be done. It makes sense. I think 60% of various communities are part of this. Sixty per cent, I think—is that not correct, Bob?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Forty per cent are not, and they're doing this voluntarily. There must be a reason why 40% of the other communities are not doing it, or not involved. Why is it? Do you know? What's the fear? What's the problem?

Mr. George DiPede: Honestly, I can't answer 100% why they're not involved, but I think a lot of it is: Some utility owners don't want to be mandated to have to be part of something that would force—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Why not? What's the cost to them?

Mr. George DiPede: There is no cost, as far as I know. There's a lot greater cost when utilities are not located in a timely fashion, not only to the contractor but potentially to the utility owner as well.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What about municipalities? Do they lose any control in terms of policy direction on this that you're aware of?

Mr. George DiPede: No, not at all.

Ms. Susan McGovern: No. It actually results in a safer community for the municipal sector.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. Yeah, right.

These are the questions. We understood that there may be some communities that are afraid of losing some control, and I don't know what that might be. I don't know why many are voluntarily involved and some not, which is why you and others want to make it a mandatory thing. It seems to make sense from a safety point of view. I never quite understood the arguments from the other side, but maybe we'll get it, and hopefully this is a way to solve some of those questions. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Mr. Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I'd just like to thank you and Ms. McGovern for coming here today. I appreciate the work you do in keeping our communities safe and the people who use that infrastructure safe.

I have a question about the local routing service provider. I guess the first question is: Why do you think there should be only one? The second one: If there is one, what type of system can you put in place to have more of a fair RFP process to choose the best provider? I guess the third question is: What will happen to those other providers in the 40%? Will the legislation just end their ability to service the communities that they've been connected to for a long time?

Mr. George DiPede: I don't think we're saying that there should only be one. Each community and each utility owner is still going to be responsible for providing the locates. What the One Call does is, it's a call centre basically that allows us to make one phone call, we give the description of the work we're doing, the depths we're going, the location and when we need the locate done, and then they dispatch to the various utilities who are responsible for locating it. The actual provider of the locate itself: The utility owners can pick whoever they want. They can open it up to a fair market. We're not asking for one locator; we just want one call centre that allows us to do it.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Right now, the One Call centre works with 60% of the municipalities; is that correct?

Mr. George DiPede: Yes, but it only works with—to my knowledge, what we've always had is only two: Bell and gas. So when you call One Call now, if there is a voluntary participation, they only call Bell and gas. Every other utility—cable, different hydro, water and sewer, etc.—they're all separate phone calls you have to make.

Mr. Michael Coteau: So those other calls—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Coteau—

Mr. Michael Coteau: That's it?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Sorry. I've got—

Mr. Michael Coteau: Oh, perfect. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): We appreciate it. That's our time. I know we're going to hear more about this through the other presentations, and members will ask questions. Thanks for coming in today.

Mr. George DiPede: Thank you for your time.

**UNDERGROUND ENGINEERING
SERVICES**

PROMARK-TELECON INC.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Our next presentation: Underground Engineering Services and Promark-Telecon Inc. Good afternoon, gentlemen, and welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. Any time you don't use will be divided among members of the committee to ask questions. You can just start by stating your name for our recording purposes and proceed when you're ready.

Mr. Ophir Wainer: Good afternoon, honourable members. My name is Ophir Wainer. Beside me is Jim Teehan.

Honourable members of the committee—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Could you just pull the microphone a little bit closer to you, so we can—thank you very much, sir.

1620

Mr. Ophir Wainer: You're welcome.

Honourable members of the committee, I stand here before you today representing two companies: Promark-Telecon and Underground Engineering Services. Promark-Telecon is a Canadian company that was created in 1996 to respond to business opportunities created initially by two major utility industry groups in eastern Canada, various telecommunication companies and natural gas distribution industries to significantly improve the entire process of locates in Ontario and Quebec. These decisions led to the creation of Ontario One Call.

For over 10 years, Promark-Telecon has been providing various utility locates in Ontario and Quebec for clients as diverse as Enbridge Gas, Bell Canada, Vidéotron and Hydro Ottawa. Promark-Telecon is one of the leading locate service providers in Ontario and Quebec. Promark-Telecon effectively operates in both Ontario One Call and Info-Excavation—the sister to Ontario One Call in Quebec—the locate request organizations in Ontario and Quebec.

Promark-Telecon is involved with the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, the ORCGA. This is a proactive approach to damage prevention that involves the audience operating in the underground environment.

Underground Engineering Services offers specialized services that provide timely and accurate underground utility information, both horizontal and vertical, for municipalities, consulting engineers, surveyors, project owners and private property owners who wish to pinpoint the location of various utilities in the public right of way during the design stage of their project.

UES holds a certificate of authorization—a C of A—from the PEO, Professional Engineers Ontario. UES is a very active member of the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance.

UES and Promark-Telecon Inc. both have a very high stake in the safety of the infrastructure community. We

are on the front lines every day of damage prevention as an LSP—locate service provider—and as an SUE firm—a subsurface utility engineering firm. The firm's professional DPTs—damage prevention technicians—and SUE technicians provide utility locates to all forms of excavators, from large-scale excavation companies to the homeowner excavating his backyard.

As the public face to many utilities, our DPT and SUE technicians have a vast and wide interaction with the public. As utility ambassadors they travel from location to location, designating utilities for the common good of the public at large, not just for safety but for the overall economic good of society. On a daily basis they serve as educators, informing the public of the damage prevention message.

This message is overshadowed by the message that One Call is not really One Call. Our DPT and SUE technicians are left scrambling for words in trying to convey the damage prevention message when they are asked by the public at large who to call for locates. Should he or she provide the telephone book numbers—and if you'll take a look at note 1, I actually provided a little sheet which is provided by the city of Ottawa, which lists 13 numbers which you're required to call when you're excavating in the city of Ottawa. Should he or she provide the telephone book numbers related to that specific area, and the caller happens to omit one of the numbers, the ramifications could be devastating, economically and safety-wise.

Having a true One Call would protect the \$100 billion of infrastructure assets that Ontario is estimated to have. True One Call would also cause a reduction in the estimated 12,000 third party strikes that have occurred in the province of Ontario in the last year.

UES works on both sides of the proverbial coin, operating as locate provider and, from time to time, as an excavator during SUE projects for utility verification. The current hole on the One Call picture disturbs me. I, as a damage prevention professional, sometimes struggle to ensure that I have made all the necessary calls. There are areas where there are no physical indications that a subject utility is evident, and without prior knowledge of this utility, it could be missed.

Case in point: UES was conducting an SUE—sub-surface utility engineering—operation at the Bridgepoint Health centre for the redevelopment of the hospital. A full utility circulation was done, and once the design planning stage had been completed, UES began to verify, with vacuum excavation technologies, some locations of the vertical depth of the utilities. During this process, UES had placed a call to One Call and various other organizations—to be exact, three calls: to the Ontario One Call Centre, city of Toronto 311, and Dig Line Ontario for some telecom members. When verification began, we had discovered and damaged the outer coating of an undocumented fibre optic communication cable line to the hospital. This action could have placed lives at risk, not to mention the economic impact on the hospital and all others at the hospital. The following was a result

of a telecommunication fibre provider to the hospital not being a member of the associated One Call or Dig Line Ontario, rather a separate call to the provider that was unknown to UES.

Promark-Telecon Inc. and UES as an organization live the day-to-day life of damage prevention and public safety question. If the above incident can happen to us, then the consequences to the layman are significant. The amount of damage and public risk associated with not passing this bill is nearly bordering on negligence. In the US, where the legislation was passed in July 1998, public awareness is very high, and with the additional legislation of the 811 one-call number, the damages have significantly decreased. I've also placed on footnote 2 a graph of the damages decreasing year over year over year with the release of 811 and also the one-call legislation. The decrease in utility damages and increased public safety and economic productivity is a direct result of the mandatory one-call system.

I urge the standing committee to endorse and take heed of the words I've spoken today. This is not just a passive issue with little to no consequence, but rather an issue of great public need to protect the economic and safety well-being of all Ontario residents. We must take pride that such a diverse group from all walks of life have come to support this issue, from the excavators to the regulators to the municipalities to the utilities and even the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. Politicians from all walks—Conservative MPP Bob Bailey and NDP MPP Paul Miller—have all thrown their support behind Bill 8. Others must consider the consequences of not taking a similar proactive position.

Mr. Jim Teehan: I will just add a small point: UES and Promark-Telecon are in the industry, 38 years of experience in it, and it is still extremely difficult for those in the industry to find out everything that's underground. What chance does the average Joe have of operating effectively and safely in that environment? Extremely tough.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation. In rotation, Mr. Marchese, your NDP caucus is up.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You both make good points. As I said to the earlier presenter, I suspect all of you will say the same thing over and over again. And it makes sense, because that's all you can say. The point of having it mandatory is that, first, it would make it easier for everyone. Second, when you have one call centre, then everybody is involved. The previous presenter said that when you call now, the call centre only connects you to Bell and gas, not the others. So that's a problem. If you have a mandatory system, then you can capture federally governed systems as well, which would bring in TransCanada Pipelines connections into this, and that would be good, too, I imagine. Do you want to speak to that as well?

Mr. Jim Teehan: Yes. There are a number of other facility owners, utilities that are a member of One Call. If you go to Niagara, for example, you will get your locates

done with one phone call for six utilities. In Ottawa there are five utilities involved in One Call: hydro, Bell, gas and a number of others.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right.

Mr. Jim Teehan: So it's effective, it's easy. It'll take away an excuse of it being too complicated and time-consuming to get all the information you need before you dig. You have one source; they will take care of distributing that message to all the member utilities.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: To everyone, right.

Mr. Jim Teehan: And if all utilities are members—I hesitate to use the word "no-brainer," but it is.

1630

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The interesting thing is that 50 states do it. They all have one call centre in every state, which is unbelievable.

Mr. Jim Teehan: It's mandated.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Interesting stuff.

Mr. Jim Teehan: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Ms. Mangat, go ahead.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Jim, for the presentation and the work you are doing.

In my opinion, the bill lacks an accountability and transparency framework for the proposed one monopoly service provider. If there is one service provider, there will be no competition. In your opinion, what do you propose to ensure that the service provider can effectively and efficiently provide its monopoly service so that it is cost-effective and meets the needs of the members?

Mr. Jim Teehan: If you take a look at the work that has been done within Ontario One Call—now, there are more knowledgeable people than I about the inner workings of Ontario One Call. We are on the receiving end of their messages, but I know that they have made significant changes in their corporate structure, in their operating structure, to ensure that everybody has a voice in how that centre operates.

Frankly, they've made some remarkable decisions to exempt some of the utilities from actually contributing money to the operation of that centre. So I'm not sure what their rationale is for not joining, other than the fact that there are other players in it, perhaps; I'm not sure why they don't. Perhaps the utility people will have a better answer than I.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Would you mind sharing with the committee members what are those decisions they have made?

Mr. Jim Teehan: I'm sorry?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Would you mind sharing with the committee members—you talked previously about the decisions they have made. What are those decisions?

Mr. Jim Teehan: I'm not qualified to answer that. I think you will find some others who will come up who can better clarify that.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay.

Mr. Jim Teehan: I know that everybody gets a voice in how that operation—anybody who's a member gets a voice in that operation or how that operation runs and is managed.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

Mr. Jim Teehan: You're welcome.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Mr. Bailey, go ahead.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, thank you, Mr. Teehan and Mr. Wainer, for being here today.

I'll touch on the management of it a little later, but I know the people themselves, at One Call, when they come, they'll explain how the board of governance is going to work. We've heard a lot about gas and we've heard a lot about oil, but my understanding is that there are a number of other utilities, telecommunication facilities, that need locates. Could you expand a little bit on that, either one of you gentlemen? It's not just oil and gas, I guess, is what I'm—

Mr. Jim Teehan: Yes. That has been my history with the gas company and the locating industry. I believe that there are still some gas utilities that are not a member of Ontario One Call. I'm not sure why that is; you'd have to ask them. Maybe it's autonomy and maybe it's internal decisions. It might be a variety of things, so I can't speak for them.

Mr. Robert Bailey: We'll delve into that further, but I just wanted you to get on the record.

Mr. Jim Teehan: We, as the receiver of that information, both as a locate service provider—we go out and do locates for a number of utilities, and as well municipalities and consulting engineers in the design stage so that they don't have issues as they put it out to bid and go to construction. So we are the benefactor of that better information.

Mr. Robert Bailey: You're part of the due diligence that most organizations would practise today in modern Ontario.

Mr. Jim Teehan: Exactly.

Mr. Robert Bailey: To have this type of information allows you to tell a client who you're working with, like you'd say—in providing that information, you're doing your due diligence for that organization that you're representing.

Mr. Jim Teehan: Exactly.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): And with that, that's time. Thank you very much for your presentation. We appreciate your coming in.

NORTH ROCK GROUP

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Our next presentation is North Rock Group. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government.

Mr. Tony DiPede: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): You have 10 minutes for your presentation. Any time you don't use will be divided among members for questions. If you can

just simply state your name, you can start when you're ready.

Mr. Tony DiPede: My name is Tony DiPede. I am the general manager of North Rock Group. With me is Alex Karavelus, who is one of the excavator operators with our company.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Go ahead.

Mr. Tony DiPede: Thank you very much. Forgive me for being a little nervous.

Good afternoon, committee clerk, members of provincial Parliament, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tony DiPede. I'm the general manager for North Rock Group. I am a sewer, water main and road contractor in Ontario. In my over 30 years of construction life, I have worked from St. Catharines to Kingston, from Toronto to Huntsville. I have seen many changes in the construction industry with regard to utilities, such as amalgamation of hydro owners, consolidation of cables and provincial downloading of infrastructure.

We cross approximately 500 utilities in any given year on a street with 50 homes. The work that we do is full reconstruction. Usually we cross gas, Bell, hydro, sanitary and water services. That alone is 250 crossings, and there are other utilities that we cross at the same time.

I am here with my colleague Alex Karavelus, who, as I mentioned earlier, is an excavator operator with our company, North Rock. Alex has been with us since 1994. His father, Gus, retired as one of our employees and his brother John is also an excavator operator with North Rock.

North Rock Group is eager to provide advice and assistance to this committee in support of Bill 8, Ontario One Call. The time for Ontario MPPs to support Bill 8 is now, so we can continue to have people like Alex and John go home safely to their families and people like Gus retire safely from our industry.

North Rock Group was founded in 1992 by my family, the DiPedes. We are primarily an infrastructure general contractor, providing servicing construction for both public and private sector work across southern Ontario. North Rock grew out of the C.M. DiPede Group, a company owned by my father, in 1991. Our 20-year-old reputation has been built on quality workmanship, integrity, value and safety.

North Rock works in municipalities of all sizes, urban and rural, to bring you clean water and sewers. For example, tomorrow morning when you're brushing your teeth, remember us, because that's the kind of thing we do; we bring you your water and your sewer.

It must be remembered that Ontario One Call will benefit not only contractors, but municipalities and homeowners. Municipalities do excavations for repairs and landscaping in park areas and public areas also. Homeowners need to dig to put up fences on new or old properties. Currently, safe excavation is a real issue.

As spoken by the others already, currently all 50 US states have in place a mandatory one-call system supported by a mandatory one-call number, 811. These

initiatives executed by the US government have ensured that 99% of all locate calls end in safe excavations. These statistics are staggering and provide solid evidence that mandatory and timely one-call legislation is proven to foster safe workplaces for contractors like North Rock Group and the general public that we work for.

I'd like now to take a few minutes to speak on a real-life scenario in our industry. Each region in Ontario has at least one common shared road which divides the boundaries. There's a handout that we have given. It's a map of York region. As you'll see on that map, Steeles Avenue is a boundary between York and Toronto, and also between York and Durham. Within these municipalities, you have many cities such as North York, Markham, Toronto, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. These municipalities, at one time, may have had their own utility and hydro companies. That also is the second handout which we have handed out, and it shows these utilities. You can see the various numbers of the utilities that are out there in the municipalities. Each one has independent utilities.

So let's try to visualize this: a water main break at the intersection of Jane and Steeles. If you're not aware of it exactly, Jane and Steeles is where you have York University, Pioneer Village, the new subway station that is going to be built soon, cars, buses, business and foot traffic.

If we get called to do a water main repair, before North Rock begins to remove the asphalt for the repair, I would need to call the present-day One Call, and that present-day One Call would notify Bell and Enbridge. It's easy; one phone call, two utilities notified. Within a couple of hours, usually, they're there and we can start to dig.

However, based on the way that the One Call is set up today, that is unfortunately not the case. After I call One Call, then I would have to turn around and I would have to call PowerStream, as there could be PowerStream-owned hydro on Jane Street or on Steeles. After that, I would call Toronto Hydro because there could be Toronto Hydro-owned hydro on Jane Street or Steeles. Then I would have to call Hydro One, because there could be a Hydro One-owned utility, again, on Jane or Steeles. Then I would have to call Toronto traffic because they control the lights and the traffic signals on Steeles. Then I would have to call Vaughan roads because they control the lights and signals on Jane.

We're not done yet—far from it. Then I would have to call Rogers to call for their cables. Then I would have to call Atria communications to see if they have anything in the area. By the way, Atria—I didn't know it existed until two years ago.

Sorry, we're not done yet. York region needs to be called to determine whether it's their water main or Toronto's, and then you would have to call Toronto to make sure that it is theirs.

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There's still more; depending on where the break is, we would need to call the city of Toronto to locate the

sanitary sewers and the storm sewers, and then we would need to call the city of Vaughan to locate the sanitary sewers and the storm sewers.

I know this sounds onerous, but you can follow this all up. This is actually what we would have to do in an area similar to Jane and Steeles, where it's divided between the city of Toronto and York region. We need to ensure that all utilities are identified to make safe and fast repairs.

These calls I have identified will take approximately eight hours to complete on a good day. If we're lucky, all the utilities will be able to show up and perform their locates, which they are not mandated to do. If they do show up, which sometimes doesn't happen right away, this repair at a major intersection could take days, resulting in extended closures affecting everyday businesses at York University, Pioneer Village, not to mention halting above-ground traffic such as the UPS distribution centre that's there and the subway. A one-call system would allow people with the proper information and networks to expedite locates and repairs, and minimize the closures and resulting economic impact. Rushing never solves anything.

North Rock's recommendations to the committee: North Rock asks the committee to give serious thought to making Ontario One Call a mandatory system right now. North Rock also asks the committee to address the issue of timeliness and enforce a 48-hour turnaround for accurate locates. Finally, North Rock asks the committee to pass this legislation before the end of this session and to ensure that the regulations are drafted and implemented in a timely fashion.

Every construction season that goes by without mandatory One Call is another construction season that could prove to be harmful or fatal to our workers, their families and the general public. It is time to stop putting the people of Ontario needlessly at risk.

Along with North Rock and the rest of the construction industry, please support Bill 8, the Ontario One Call legislation.

In conclusion, North Rock Group, its employees and their family members thank the committee for the opportunity to publicly state our support for Ontario One Call. Once again, we must stress swift action in legislating Ontario One Call.

We look forward to working with the government and all MPPs across the province. Let us ensure the swift passage of Bill 8, resulting in a safer working environment for contractors and the general public.

If there's further information you require, I'm available by email, cell phone. We don't use smoke signals anymore, but we can try that one too.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): One Call, right?

Mr. Tony DiPede: One Call.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): We've got some questions for you, so the Liberal caucus is up first. Mr. Dickson, go ahead.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you. Good afternoon, gentlemen. Well done. It would appear you're trying to deal

with costs, safety and productivity. I don't see anywhere here where Bill 8 is really addressing the fee setting. It doesn't indicate how fees for members will be set. It doesn't indicate how proposed members will be addressed.

A perfect example is municipalities. Of course, there are some questions from AMO as well. This raises concerns about potential cost escalation.

I know, in my business, if our industry had a reduction in paper and ink, everybody would have similar benefits and savings. The cost would go down and in theory the selling price would be less, so it's a win-win situation for the consumer.

This is all rather silent. It doesn't lay out a lot of things, such as fee setting, that process, and it doesn't really tell you how the members can be assured that they're going to get value for their money, especially if the cost goes down. Some of these members are obviously not going to have a running tally of that or are going to be privy to all of that information. It's a multitude of questions, but once you get into the finances and the selling price and everything else, there's a golden opportunity for a lot of things to happen.

Mr. Tony DiPede: Well, if I may answer—

Mr. Joe Dickson: Sure.

Mr. Tony DiPede: The first thing is: What's the cost of one life? Let's start with that. If Alex is digging, the machine that Alex digs with doesn't see whether it's a root, a water service or a gas main. If it's not marked and we're not told that it's there, he digs through it and he pulls that out of the ground. The cost of one life should be the number one thing here. Alex wants to go home to his family. I should probably let him speak to this, but Alex's concern isn't just for himself; it's for the people who are working in the hole with him, the kids who are walking through—because we work in front of schools; we work in front of your house, your house and your house; we work in front of everybody's house. Please, let's not forget that. So if they're not putting the proper utilities—if they don't come out there and do what they have to do in the timeline that we need, and we don't know what's there, we could be endangering everybody's life who's sitting in this room—your family, your children, your grandchildren; all of that. That has to be the number one concern here.

By calling One Call, I get this water main fixed at Jane and Steeles in a short time frame. If I have to call everybody—and I'm hoping that I've called everyone. All this amalgamation that's gone on—PowerStream. With municipal consent, the municipalities give the opportunity for the utilities to place utilities underground in various areas. I don't know what's underground because Ontario Hydro or Hydro One or whatever they call it this week is allowed to be on municipally owned property such as something that was owned by the province. But now that the province doesn't own that anymore and they downloaded it to the municipalities, Hydro One is on one side of the road and Toronto Hydro is on the other side of

the road. I make a phone call: I'm calling for hydro, but I don't know that I have to call for three hydrods.

We did a project at Yonge and Finch. We didn't know—not because we're not educated; because someone has to give us the idea that it's there. If no one tells me it's there, there's no signs, there's no marking, I have no idea what's underground. The general contractor parked a trailer on top of an area. We were in a meeting. They came in and said, "You guys are parked on top of TransCanada Pipeline and Trans-Northern Pipeline"—I didn't even know it existed, and I apologize if anybody's here from them. They had parked the trailer, and we had to move the trailer. There was no idea, no identification, nothing, that Trans-Northern Pipeline goes through Yonge and Finch along the hydro corridor.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): I need to stop you there because we need to move on with questions from all of the members or all of the caucuses.

I'm going to move over to Bob Bailey, who's waiting to ask you a question, and we can continue the conversation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you again for presenting today. I think you talked about the complexity of excavations, and I think that was very plain in your document, so I want to move on. I agree: The cost of one life—we can't put a dollar amount on that.

I'd like to turn to Alex. Alex, I started out in my career many years ago, I actually operated heavy equipment. I was in the position that you were in lots of times, operating. Could you speak to us, as the actual operator, of what it's like when you turn that big hydraulic machine loose on a piece of ground and once you commit to start going through—take us through it. I know what I'm talking about, but anyway, you explain to the committee what it feels like. How sure are you when you start to dig what is underground?

Mr. Alex Karavelus: Like you state, you don't know what's underground. I'm just going by what I'm told. So yeah, you get nervous at first, right? Because like I said, it's not my life; I've got other people around me, too. I've got other fellows that work in the hole. If something does go wrong, it goes bad for everybody. Sometimes we've been misguided, like Tony was saying, on whether they said it's marked or—the key word—not sure if it's there.

Mr. Robert Bailey: So you're really relying on the way the present system—

Mr. Alex Karavelus: On information.

Mr. Robert Bailey: You've got to rely on other people's good faith. The foreman or someone tells you, "Yeah, we made all the calls."

Mr. Alex Karavelus: Absolutely.

Mr. Robert Bailey: This One Call system would certainly alleviate, as much as possible, your mind for your fellow workers and your family. Like Tony said, you want to be able to go home. They want to send all their employees home every night.

Mr. Alex Karavelus: Like he was saying, the thing with One Call was—my big concern was, he might miss

something; he's human, too. Like he said, he's not aware of things. If a company comes in place like this, where they make the one call and everything's notified, you feel a little better, right? You're thinking, "Okay, that's what they do every day." That's their work on a daily basis. Like how we excavate and do the water and sewers—that's their call to make the call. Then you're not misled, I would think.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What I want to ask the presenters that are coming today is just to reflect on the questions that are being asked because obviously, the Liberal members have questions that we need to answer, and I want to answer them, too. I know that you all have a presentation, but we need to address some of the questions that AMO is asking and that some municipalities are asking in order to be able to get a better sense of how we tackle them, because it's good to have the support of all three political parties obviously.

AMO is concerned that there may be double costs to municipalities, as I understand it. I don't know what that means and I don't know what they are, but we need to clarify it because we need to deal with that. Do you have a sense of that?

Mr. Tony DiPede: I think it's much more complex—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Sorry; please respond, but just try to keep your answer fairly concise, if you can.

Mr. Tony DiPede: One Call, by doing that, now it's coming out of one area. There should be no major additional costs because of the fact that one person knows where it's going. The cost factor of it going up, I don't understand—I'm probably not the right person to be able to answer that. There should be no major additional costs for this to happen. It's coming out of one area instead of having 20 people working in different areas coming up with that. It's centralized; it's calling one place instead of calling 30.

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: So who's paying the fees to get this call centre?

Mr. Tony DiPede: The fees would be—I'm assuming they're going to come from the utilities.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Not municipalities?

Mr. Tony DiPede: Municipalities would be, and again—I don't know the exact answer to that.

Mr. Todd Smith: Wrong person to ask.

Mr. Tony DiPede: Wrong person to ask, I think, would be the best way to put it.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But some of them may know.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): I appreciate that. You're trying to get the questions on the floor.

That's the time for this presentation. We're going to continue this discussion. Gentlemen, thanks—

Mr. Tony DiPede: I can get you any answers you need, if I can follow up, if you have any questions later. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): I appreciate you coming in today. I appreciate your presentation.

Mr. Tony DiPede: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Chair, I think the next presenter would be more able to talk to the costs—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Explain some of the rates? Okay. That's fine.

Mr. Robert Bailey: So, who's up first?

Interjection: You.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Me? Okay.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): You are.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Maybe I could tell him, before he starts his presentation, to talk to that, instead of—I don't know what his presentation is. I think he's doing it by video conference—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Teleconference. He's on the line.

Mr. Robert Bailey: If that's okay with the Chair.

COMMON GROUND ALLIANCE

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): The next presentation is Common Ground Alliance. Robert, are you there?

Mr. Robert Kipp: Yes, I am.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Robert, try to speak up a little bit, if possible.

Mr. Robert Kipp: I'll do my best. Ready to go?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): We are ready to go. You've got 10 minutes for your presentation. Robert, just so you know, there are bells ringing for a vote in the Legislature right now. We'll try to get through your part of the presentation. We may need to return for the question portion, but go ahead and get started.

Mr. Robert Kipp: Okay. My name is Bob Kipp. I'm with the Common Ground Alliance, a US-based organization. I was born and raised in Ottawa, graduated from the University of Ottawa, taught school for a few years, then went to work for Bell Canada in the 1970s. I held a wide range of positions in Bell, and in 1993, when I was with international, I was transferred to Virginia to manage our US operations. I was recruited from there in the year 2000, and that's how I came to Common Ground Alliance.

Common Ground Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to shared responsibility in the damage prevention of underground facilities. The CGA was created on September 19, 2000, at the completion of Common Ground: Study of One-Call Systems and Damage Prevention Best Practices. The study, sponsored by DOT of the US, was completed in 1999 by 161 experts from the damage prevention stakeholder community. Participants in the study represented the following groups: oil, gas, telecom, railroads, utilities, cable TV, one-call systems and centres, excavation, locators, equipment manufacturers, design engineers, and regulators—federal, state

and local. Common Ground study concluded on June 30, 1999, with the publication of Common Ground: Study of One-Call Systems and Damage Prevention Best Practices.

At the conclusion of the study, the Damage Prevention Path Forward Initiative led to the development of the CGA. We now count more than 1,500 individuals, representing 16 stakeholder groups and nearly 200 member organizations. In addition, our 65 regional partners total some 3,000 members, covering most states and Canadian provinces.

The CGA's nearly \$1.9 million in revenue for 2011 was derived from a PHMSA grant—US government—of \$500,000 and membership and sponsorship dues, totalling about \$1.4 million. In addition, members contribute approximately 10,000 hours of their time and pay for their expenses. The funding and contribution of time enable the CGA to complete its programs and operate the organization. CGA has three full-time employees and one part-time, and each of the CGA's 16 participating stakeholder groups has one seat on a CGA board of directors, regardless of membership, representation or financial representation.

We have six committees: best practices, technology, education, programs and marketing, data reporting, one-call systems and regional partners committee. The committee decisions are made by consensus of all 16 stakeholders. Every best practice, every educational initiative, every decision at the committee level comes with the support of every stakeholder group.

I'm speaking here on behalf of the CGA and its members across Canada to lend my support of enactment of a one-call law in Ontario. I'll provide you with some US experiences that might help influence this outcome. It's important to note that when I refer to the CGA and its working committees, numerous members of these committees work and reside in various provinces in Canada. One of our directors, Mike Sullivan, is the head of the Alberta One-Call centre and the Canadian CGA.

There is no single comprehensive national damage prevention law in the US. On the contrary, all 50 states have a law designated to prevent excavation damage to underground utilities. However, these state laws vary considerably and no two state laws are identical. Therefore, excavation damage prevention stakeholders in each state are subject to different legal and regulatory requirements. Variances in state laws include excavation notice requirements, damage-reporting requirements, exemptions from the requirements of laws for excavators and/or utility operators, and provisions for enforcement of the laws and many others. Though these laws have existed in some cases since the 1970s, there's always room for improvement.

That said, in recent testimony to a Congressional subcommittee on pipeline reauthorization, a number of associations recommended that two issues be reviewed with respect to one-call laws in the US: first, the removal of exemptions to the various state laws; and secondly,

where none exist today, institute effective enforcement programs of those state laws.

On April 2—earlier this week—the Department of Transportation issued a notice of proposed rule-making, and it stated in part that “though all states have a damage prevention program, not all states adequately enforce their state damage prevention” one-call “laws....

“Excavation damage poses by far the single greatest threat to distribution system safety, reliability and integrity; therefore, excavation damage prevention presents the most significant opportunity for distribution pipeline safety improvements.

“States with comprehensive damage prevention programs that include effective enforcement have a substantially lower probability of excavation damage to pipeline facilities than states that do not. The lower probability of excavation damage translates to a substantially lower risk of serious incidents and consequences resulting from excavation damage to pipelines....

“Based on incident reports submitted to” the government, “failure to use an available one-call system is a known cause of pipeline accidents.... PHMSA was able to obtain data for three states over the course of the establishment of their excavation damage prevention programs,” and that information is available from the government. “Each of the three states had a decrease of at least 63% in the number of excavation damage incidents occurring after they initiated their enforcement programs. While many factors can contribute to the decrease in state excavation damage incidents, PHMSA found these states to be a helpful starting point on which to estimate the benefits of this rule-making.”

The report goes on to state: “As noted, PHMSA supports effective state excavation damage prevention law enforcement to protect pipelines. PHMSA strongly believes that individual states should retain the primary responsibility to enforce their excavation damage prevention laws effectively. The proposed regulations do not conflict with the best practices established by the Common Ground Alliance....

“NUCA”—the National Utility Contractors Association—“commented that ‘participation’ in excavation damage prevention includes calling the one-call centre before excavating. However, NUCA also commented that underground facility operators being members of the appropriate one-call centre is fundamental to the excavation damage prevention process and that exemptions only increase the likelihood of facility damages. NUCA cites the Common Ground” study “for which ‘the underlying premise for prevention of damage to underground facilities, and the foundation for this study, is that all underground facility owners/operators are members of one-call centres, and that it is always best to call before excavation.’”

The CGA best practices are quickly becoming the standard on damage prevention practices. A number of states in the US have adopted some or all of the best practices in their laws or rules governing excavation practices. The best practices committee, a diverse, 70-

plus-person committee of damage prevention professionals, comprised of all stakeholder groups, including representation from most Canadian provinces, is very cognizant of the evolution of and gives the utmost thought and care to every practice considered.

The damage prevention leaders in Canada have modified the best practices to make them relevant in Canada and are using the Canadian version in most provinces today. The CGA prints a new edition of Best Practices every year, reflecting changes made in the current year.

In August 1999, the 161 experts who developed the best practices unanimously agreed that an effective compliance and enforcement program at state level was required to reduce the incidences of damages to the infrastructure. That idea holds true today. The best practices have remained the same on this issue since they were first written more than 10 years ago. The CGA believes a consistent, fair and balanced state enforcement of one-call laws in states where no enforcement exists today has the greatest potential for helping reduce damages. There are states that enforce their laws without impacting their already tight state expense budgets. We believe the second most important consideration is the elimination of state exemption to one-call laws.

These two issues, if implemented, will help us continue the yearly trend of reduced excavation damages in the US.

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I would speak briefly now about the CGA's damage information reporting tool. DIRT is an effective means of collecting data on damages to underground facilities. This is a voluntary filing requirement that can assist in the collection of data on damages. The data is made available to all by the CGA. Tailored versions called Virtual Private DIRT are also available. To date, Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, BC and others gather provincial damage data through our system. More than 112,000 damage reports were input to our system in 2010. As we work to completion of our 2011 report, more than 200,000 damage reports are already in the system, ready for analysis and publication.

The primary purpose in collecting underground facility damage data is to analyze the data and learn why events occur and how actions by industry can prevent them in the future, thereby ensuring the safety and protection of people and the infrastructure. Data collection allows CGA to identify root causes, perform trend analysis and help educate all stakeholders so that damages can be reduced through effective practices and procedures.

Finally, in March 2012, the GAO—United States Government Accountability Office—report on collecting data and sharing information on federally unregulated gathering pipelines stated, “As to the effectiveness of one-call programs, the Common Ground Alliance has reported that, in 2010, when an excavator notified a call centre before digging, damage occurred less than 1% of the time.” A very impressive—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Robert, sorry. We're a few minutes over the 10, so I'm going to need to stop you there. You've got an opportunity to respond to some of the questions. I'm going to turn it over to the Conservative caucus. Bob Bailey is going to ask you a couple of questions.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Kipp, thank you very much for your presentation. We might have to go in a few minutes. I don't know whether we'll keep you on and come back, but anyway, I'll try and get through mine.

Real quick: You've done a great rendition there of how this works in the 50 US states and how it would be important here. We do have a number of questions from the members of the Legislature who are present today. Could you speak to—apparently there are some issues with AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; they've got some concerns with this bill. And also speak to the cost and the governance of this new board, if you could.

I won't ask you anything else, if you can go into that in some detail to alleviate some of the questions some of the members have that are here today. Okay?

Mr. Robert Kipp: Yes. In the US, some municipalities belong and some don't, but one of the things that's coming out of the new pipeline safety reauthorization is that they will remove exemptions and that all municipalities, if they own the infrastructure, will have to adhere to state one-call laws.

In terms of the cost of the one-call boards, that varies, how they do it, but it's typically member-driven, and they either pay—or owner-operator driven. When I say “member-driven,” if you own infrastructure, you pay in. It may vary by the size of your infrastructure.

Then you will also be billed—generally speaking, again, not in all cases—on a per-ticket cost. So when you call the one-call centre and you say, “Hey, I'm about to dig here at Spruce and Main. I want the locates done,” the one-call centre will check their maps, they'll see that Ontario Hydro is there, Bell Canada is there, and somebody else is there. They will send them the ticket, they will send the locators out there, and they will bill them per ticket issued—anywhere from 65 cents to \$1.25, depending on the state.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay, thanks for the response. That's it, Bob, on this one. I need to move on.

Ms. Campbell, do you have a question?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: That was my question.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay. Ms. Mangat, go ahead.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Robert. My question is, how much support is there from the affected parties such as telecommunication and cable companies? And do they support mandatory membership?

Mr. Robert Kipp: Well, all of our best practices are done on a consensus basis, so the answer is yes. In terms of support, they all support their own one-call centres, but in terms of the Common Ground Alliance, we receive literally tens of thousands of dollars from all of these

industries, and I don't think they would support us if they didn't see the benefit. We estimate that damages in the US have gone from \$450,000 in 2004 to \$160,000 in 2010. So that is a major, major reduction in damages, and those are obviously reductions in costs to all of the infrastructure owner-operators.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Time for more questions?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Robert. First, I just want to apologize for the bells in the background. It's a repeat of yesterday; it's our opposition trying to end debate.

I have a quick question to ask you first. In regard to municipal governments that have found success in setting up their own system, what would you say to a municipal government, a small regional government, that has put a lot of time and investment into its own response centre and now it's being told, if this legislation does pass, that the provincial government is going to standardize it right across the system? Do you think there's value in smaller regional outfits that are successful?

Mr. Robert Kipp: I think when you look at what has happened, if I go to the US and I say—you know, they're consolidating versus getting smaller. So when you look at the province of Ontario having one One Call centre, personally, I think that makes sense. You've got one centre, one phone number. The calls will all be dispatched to them from that One Call centre. The One Call centre will access their mapping system and will enable them to, first of all, if they have antiquated mapping systems, get a better mapping system as a cost-sharing type of thing. I think you will see that their costs will be reduced in the long run and the damages will be reduced, which, in total, affects all of the people who live in their municipalities and their own people. So I think it's a win-win, quite frankly.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Is Common Ground Alliance a not-for-profit agency, or is it for-profit?

Mr. Robert Kipp: Yes. It's a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Okay, thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Bailey, do you have a quick question?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've got a real quick question. Thank you, Mr. Kipp. It's just more a statement. Just to confirm, it will cost utilities maybe \$1.70 to make a call. But it's my understanding that the general public, if I was putting a fence up or a deck, there's no cost to the general public for Joe Q. Smith who calls up to do a locate. Am I correct on that?

Mr. Robert Kipp: Totally free. There were 26 million requests last year to one-call centres in the US. From that, they issued 147 million locate requests. All of the calls are free.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your time. That's time for your presentation. I appreciate you being on the line with us today.

Mr. Robert Kipp: Thank you very much. Good luck.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Goodbye.

DRILLCO FOUNDATION CO. LTD.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): The next presentation—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Well, I think we can get the presentation in. Okay?

Mr. Michael Coteau: And we'll come back for questions?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Yes, absolutely. We'll be flexible on that.

Good afternoon, sir. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. You've got 10 minutes for your presentation. We're in the middle of this but we'll make sure we accommodate you, so go ahead and you can start.

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: Certainly. I probably won't take the 10 minutes allotted.

I'm representing Drillco Foundation Co. I'll give you a little history of myself. My name is Neil Strowbridge. I am a Canadian-registered safety professional in my 15th year in the safety profession. I have worked for a variety of industries within the last six years, and the construction sector has been my focus.

I currently work as the regional safety adviser for Drillco Foundation Co., which is owned and supported by North American Construction Group, based in Acheson, Alberta. We have 4,000 employees around the world, with the largest concentration of employees in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Locally, we have 75 employees in Ontario, and we specialize in work consisting of caisson, shoring and piledriving.

We're active members of the Ontario Association of Foundation Specialists and the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance. Our interest and participation in both of these industry associations is for the improvement of safety performance in our industry.

As a construction employer, we contribute significantly to the growth of the economy in Ontario and provide sustained employment for our dedicated family of employees.

We support Bill 8 for a number of reasons, and I'm going to describe a couple of these reasons. Requiring all utility owners to be a member of Ontario One Call will allow Drillco, for example, to operate more efficiently and safely when it comes to preparing to perform our work. Currently, we may need to contact upwards of a dozen utility owners throughout the province to locate their buried services that may or may not travel through our work site. If there was one phone call to make to prepare for a job and identify all underground utility owners, we could shift resources to other areas of our business.

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Additionally, if we could contact One Call and know that all underground utility owners would be contacted to locate their buried service, we would be confident that

there would be a decreased risk of incidents while performing our work. This would allow for safe drilling, with operators focused on performing their job safely without worrying that they may contact a hidden hazard, putting themselves, their co-workers and the public at risk of injury or death.

Personally, I have had the unfortunate experience of being involved with incidents of damage to underground utilities in my role as a safety professional on a number of occasions. By having one number to call to initiate the process of locating underground utility hazards, we could potentially reduce instances of contact with and damage to public services that could result in injury and always result in the disruption of service.

While working for a previous employer, I recall investigating an incident for damage to a fibre optic cable that resulted in lost service for 800 customers for 36 hours while the repair was made, which ended in a cost of \$75,000; as well as a water main that was damaged and required repairs that lasted for six hours. In both cases, the project manager who prepared the job thought he had contacted all utility owners by requesting the locates through our current One Call system. Thankfully, there were no injuries in either incident.

Overall, I think the benchmark, as the previous speaker indicated, is the use of the true one-call system in the US, where calling 811 would initiate the locating of underground utilities. This system has allowed 99% of locate calls to result in safe excavation. The time for a mandatory one-call system in Ontario, we feel, is now. Municipalities, large and small, urban and rural, are in support of this bill, and I'm sure, through these public hearings, you will find that support.

Reducing the risk of injury and incidents of damage will result in millions of dollars in savings and consistent services to the public in Ontario. As we enter this busy construction season, we need to pass the legislation now, in the spring sitting, before more people are affected by disruption, or worse, by injury. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation. We've got a few minutes.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I don't have any questions at this point.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay. Ms. Mangat, go ahead.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Neil, for the presentation. In your presentation, you have said that municipalities, large and small, urban and rural, are all in support of this bill, whereas my understanding is AMO doesn't support it. They don't support mandatory membership. Why not provide flexibility instead of making it mandatory?

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: From my understanding, now, with the system, it is voluntary, and we're not seeing the participation through One Call from the utility owners to have the impact on the safety for excavators and construction companies that are affected by contact of underground utilities. So, by having a mandatory participation,

it eliminates the companies that don't want to or don't feel that they will benefit from participation.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Smith?

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm interested in the fact that what you spoke about when you were talking about hits—basically what happens is, when there is a hit, and it takes out Internet or water services, the one thing we haven't touched on today is the effect that those kind of strikes have on commerce and on business. Is there any way to measure how much these impact businesses when these do occur? I know, just a couple of months ago in Belleville, where I'm from, there was a hit that occurred, and it took out all the banking and Internet services in the entire city for an entire day.

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: Right. It's difficult to put a monetary value on it but it certainly can estimate—the people who are impacted and how their lives are affected both financially and personally through not being able to bank on that particular day, or worse, if there's a gas explosion and people's lives are affected with personal injury. So, absolutely, it's difficult to put an estimate on it. I think the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance does have the statistics with the number of incidents that occur, and you could average those numbers. I don't have them with me, Mr. Smith, to be able to speak to those directly.

Mr. Todd Smith: The savings that do occur for municipalities—I know the members opposite talk about the fact that AMO doesn't support this, but the numbers of savings that occur by eliminating these types of strikes because of these one-call services are enormous, aren't they?

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: Absolutely: number one, for repair costs; number two, down time. The costs, certainly, to the municipalities are substantial, and substantial enough that participation should be encouraged.

Mr. Todd Smith: And when you consider the small amount that this service will cost municipalities to buy in, the savings are exponential compared to that cost.

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: That's my belief as well.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Bailey, anything?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Just to emphasize what my colleague said, the opportunities, as well—it's the confidence, when you send employees out, that you're going to be able to send them home again at night.

Would this bill, with some tweaks to make it even better, reassure you and your employees, when you send them out every day, that they're going to come home at the end of the day to their families?

Mr. Neil Strowbridge: It absolutely would. I think it would give the operators, number one, the confidence that they are operating the equipment and they can then focus on the employees around that they're interacting with, the other moving equipment on-site, above ground,

that they can see, and eliminate that risk of contacting some hidden hazard that they can't see.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Fine.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Neil, thanks very much for your presentation. I appreciate your coming in today. Thank you, folks.

We'll recess here for the vote, and if members could make their way back to the committee room after the vote, that would be greatly appreciated, so we can continue with the presentations. Thank you.

The committee recessed from 1716 to 1726.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay, folks, we'll resume deputations. I believe the next group we have is the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. We have folks on the telephone with us. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. Members are here to hear your presentation. If you just want to start by stating your name, you've got 10 minutes for your presentation, and you can begin when you're ready.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Thank you. My name is Larry Hebert. I'm a councillor with the city of Thunder Bay and vice-president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, NOMA. With me is Charla Robinson, the executive director of NOMA. We're very pleased to have this opportunity to express our concerns regarding Bill 8, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd.

NOMA represents the interests of 37 municipalities, from Kenora and Rainy River in the west to Hornepayne and Wawa in the east.

Bill 8 would require all municipalities in Ontario to join Ontario One Call Ltd. The objects of the corporation are outlined in the bill as follows:

- a call centre that receives queries regarding the location of underground infrastructure;
- identifies whether underground infrastructure is located in the vicinity of a proposed excavation site;
- notifies members of proposed excavations that may affect underground infrastructure; and,
- raises public awareness of the need for safe digging.

NOMA has three specific concerns with Bill 8.

Concern number 1, the mandatory monopoly: Our members do not believe that there is a need for Bill 8 and are concerned that this legislation creates an unnecessary but mandatory monopoly that will duplicate services that are already successfully provided by municipalities and private companies across Ontario.

Our members strongly believe that each municipality should have a choice as to how it wishes to manage infrastructure locate calls. Many municipalities across the northwest currently provide infrastructure location services, either as a municipal service or by contract with private providers. This process is working well and deals with the needs of both the communities and the citizens they represent. There is no need for a legislated solution, as there is no problem to be solved.

Concern number 2, additional costs to municipalities: While Bill 8 will create a central call-handling number and provider for all of Ontario, it will not change the way in which municipalities or utilities administer infrastructure locates, meaning that municipalities and the public will have to pay for these new call-handling services, while continuing to pay for the provision of location markings as normal.

The legislation requires every municipality in Ontario to become a member of Ontario One Call Ltd. within 12 months of the act coming into force. It is our understanding that each municipality will need to pay a \$1,000 fee to join Ontario One Call, regardless of whether or not they own any underground infrastructure. This is an unnecessary additional cost on municipalities and their taxpayers.

Further, we understand that a fee of between \$1 and \$1.60 is charged by each locate dispatched. Ontario One Call has advised NOMA in writing that municipal owners pay nothing for the processing of water, sewer, traffic or streetlight locates at this time. However, there is a concern that fees could change in future, as it is anticipated that the creation of a single-provider system could result in higher fees due to the lack of competition.

The legislation further requires a member to "immediately ... provide such information to the corporation as is necessary for the corporation to identify the location of all underground infrastructure owned by the member." NOMA is concerned that small communities may not have the capacity to provide this information without incurring significant additional costs to their municipality.

Concern number 3, impact on other providers and possible loss of jobs and local business: Current locate service providers have invested significant resources in the development of systems that meet specific local needs in northwestern Ontario. These providers will be forced out of this service by the passage of this private members' legislation with no consideration for economic impacts or job losses.

Bill 8 does not just set up a one-call system; it also mandates a specific company, Ontario One Call, to provide the service across Ontario, with no bidding process to allow other interested providers, whether corporate or municipal, to submit proposals to provide the same service in their specific area or region. If the intent of Bill 8 is to set up one number for Ontarians to call, surely the legislation could be drafted in a way that outlines the requirements of the provider while also putting in place a fair bidding process that meets this need while not forcing current companies out of business.

My time is fleeting, but I would like to mention a few other concerns. The legislation does not indicate who will be responsible to provide oversight, the board governance structure of Ontario One Call, what penalties or fines will be charged for an offence or who would be liable in the event of a mislocate that results in damage. While we understand there will be regulations in the future that address these issues, we're concerned that

these items will not be outlined until after the legislation is enacted as law.

NOMA is categorically opposed to Bill 8 as it currently is written.

We'd be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation. The Liberal caucus is up first. Questions? Mr. Dickson, go ahead.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you for your report, Larry. I just have a question: If you had the opportunity to opt out—because so much of this seems to be good in central Ontario—would that solve your problem?

Mr. Larry Hebert: It depends what you mean by opting out. If it means that we could go with current providers as is or if it went out to an RFP or whatever for providers, yes, I think that would satisfy people in northwestern Ontario.

Mr. Joe Dickson: You're right; I didn't explain that very well. I was going to say within the northern boundaries, you know, in an area that would accommodate you and others such as yourselves who have these issues to deal with, and yet still deal with the masses in central Ontario.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Right. We have, and probably other areas in Ontario do as well, a number of communities that don't have any infrastructure whatsoever in the ground.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Okay, sir, thank you. Appreciate it.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Go ahead, Conservative caucus.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'll cede to Mr. Fedeli.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Fedeli, go ahead.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good afternoon, Mr. Hebert. It's Vic Fedeli, the MPP from Nipissing.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Good afternoon, Vic.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Can you clarify for me how you believe your residents or the businesses and the municipality itself are better served by an existing process, the one you have today, that requires multiple calls?

Mr. Larry Hebert: Well, we in Thunder Bay belong to DigNORTH. Two other communities in the northwest do belong to One Call now on a voluntary basis. Others do it on their own or don't have to do it because they have no infrastructure. Right now, there have not been any problems with the current system, so we're thinking, "What's the problem? Why do we have to do this?"

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Brief follow-up; go ahead.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have been informed that the city of Thunder Bay was previously using the DigNORTH system on a trial basis and has decided not to continue. Can you explain why the city decided to drop that service?

Mr. Larry Hebert: I'm not aware that we have dropped the service. That is news to me, and I will follow up on that.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Can you describe the current system in Thunder Bay, then? If I want to call for the locate of municipal infrastructure or utility infrastructure, can you give me the details on that?

Mr. Larry Hebert: I don't know all the various specific details, but I know we do one call to DigNORTH, and they're centred in Dryden. That call is made, and then appropriate follow-up is made with the various utilities whose plant is involved.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Mr. Marchese, follow-up?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Larry, it's Rosario Marchese, MPP for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Hello.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Did I hear you correctly? You do have a One Call centre or a single point of contact for contractors and others?

Mr. Larry Hebert: Yes, right now in Thunder Bay, it's DigNORTH. In Fort Frances and one other community—

Ms. Charla Robinson: Red Rock.

Mr. Larry Hebert: —Red Rock, it's Ontario One Call. Most other communities don't have anything because they do it themselves or they don't have any infrastructure in the ground.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No infrastructure at all, eh?

Mr. Larry Hebert: No.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: God bless. Sounds like a desert, for God's sake.

Can I ask you—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Easy.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You say that each municipality will need to pay a \$1,000 fee. Where do you get that from?

Mr. Larry Hebert: That's our understanding of the legislation.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's what? I can't hear—

Ms. Charla Robinson: That's from Ontario One Call.

Mr. Larry Hebert: That's from Ontario One Call. They've written a letter to us suggesting that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, because that's not clear to me. I'm not quite sure that that is indeed true.

Ms. Charla Robinson: That's the information that has been provided. As to the fee to join Ontario One Call, it's currently set at \$1,000. They do have some special offers that they're offering right now to incentivize municipalities to join; they may waive the fee. That's the list price to join the organization, as we understand it at this time.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Sarah Campbell, MPP for Kenora-Rainy River.

You stated in your report that "NOMA is concerned that small communities may not have the capacity to provide this information without incurring significant additional costs to their municipality." Are you saying that some communities don't know where their infrastructure is?

Mr. Larry Hebert: Some of them don't necessarily have the maps themselves. They may be provided by a

private developer or a private contractor. They may hold them, because the city is so small, or the town or community is so small, that they don't have them themselves. As I said, in other cases—in your areas, there are communities that don't have any infrastructure in the ground. Therefore, they don't have anything to provide.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Just a last point—it's David Orazietti—there was a female voice that was answering one of the questions. Can someone just state their name for the purposes of our recording Hansard so we can get that information correct here?

Mr. Larry Hebert: I did introduce her in my opening remarks: Charla Robinson, who is the executive director of NOMA.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Did you catch that? Okay, good.

Thank you very much for your time and your—

Mr. Michael Coteau: Chair, is there any time left?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): There is not.

Mr. Michael Coteau: We've run out? Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Mr. Larry Hebert: Thank you very much.

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND SURVEYORS

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Our next presentation is from the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government.

Mr. Peter Lamb: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): As you're aware, you've got 10 minutes for your presentation. If you can just start by stating your name, and start when you're ready.

Mr. Peter Lamb: Thank you, and I appreciate being invited here by the committee to speak on behalf of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors. My name is Peter Lamb, and I've been an Ontario land surveyor since 1992.

I have 10 years' experience with a private surveying and mapping firm, working in both northern and southern Ontario, and I have supervised a wide variety of survey projects and do have management experience. Since 1999, I've been employed by the geomatics office of the Ministry of Transportation to provide advice and develop standards for legal and technical aspects of surveying.

I should add that for the purpose of this committee, I am here only representing the opinions of the AOLS, not necessarily my employer.

I've made a number of presentations on surveying in the utility industry to associations such as Good Roads, the ORCGA and the AOLS. I'm also a member of the CSA S250 committee that recently developed a national mapping standard for underground utilities.

Just a little bit about the AOLS to begin with: We were incorporated in 1892 to regulate the practice of professional surveying in Ontario by the Surveyors Act. This includes cadastral surveying, which is the surveying of real property boundaries. Surveys of land are valid only when performed under the supervision of a licensed Ontario land surveyor by the Surveyors Act. Approximately six million parcels of land have been surveyed by licensed AOLS members, both past and present.

Currently, the AOLS is comprised of 600 members working in about 240 private firms. Many of these are small firms, with from three to seven employees, with a few over 30 employees. Surveyors are also employed by federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

The value of surveys is about \$200 million, but they are the basis for several billion dollars' worth of infrastructure. About 100,000 new properties are created each year, and about 80,000 existing boundaries are retraced each year by Ontario land surveyors. Our clients include builders, architects, engineers, municipalities, lawyers, resource companies and road authorities, and various government ministries and agencies.

Why do surveyors need to obtain underground locates? Well, I should point out that all property lines and corners must be marked on the ground with permanent monuments so that boundaries are visible to landowners. Ontario regulation 525/91, under the Surveyors Act, describes these monuments, and includes half-inch and one-inch square iron bars or stakes that are two feet and four feet long, respectively. Survey crews install such iron bars with sledgehammers. The bars have points at the bottom and are pounded into the ground to a depth of their full two-foot and four-foot length. Also, survey benchmarks, which contain elevations, may be set as deep as six feet.

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Searching for survey monuments at property corners may mean digging with a shovel or a pick to a depth of as much as one to three feet, and serious danger may result if a power or communications cable or gas line is punctured by a survey monument.

All the work of this monumentation may be considered "breaking ground," and regulations under provincial safety laws obligate surveyors to request utility locates to help ensure field work is performed safely.

The reason the AOLS supports Bill 8 is because obtaining locates in a timely fashion for a multitude of different locations for numerous field survey crews on a daily basis is a significant logistical burden. An unknown number of utility companies in an area must be tracked down and contacted and followed up with to arrange for field visits that must often be coordinated with survey crews. This work can add up to 10% to 20% of the cost of office supervisory work, which is passed to customers and can impede the progress of our survey field crews. The AOLS supports the simplification of locate acquisitions through a One Call phone number as offered by Bill 8. A single phone call could reduce the cost of arranging locates fourfold.

I just provided a rough estimate of possible savings per year by the survey industry by multiplying the approximate number of locates per day, 150, by an approximately \$50 savings per locate, times 300 days a year, to give a figure of over \$2 million in potential savings to customers and, through them, the public.

Now, Bill 8 may not be the be-all and end-all to address the concerns that surveyors have about utilities underground, but—and we have suggested some additional measures. At the end of my paper, we have additional suggestions that, for example, good utility surveys be performed when utilities are installed in the ground so that they can be recorded properly and stored for use by future locate companies and engineering designers.

Nonetheless, we feel that an accurate database of surveys of underground utilities, accessed through a shared One Call system, would go far in improving our operations and would improve safety to the public and our workers.

We support Bill 8 for One Call as a means to improve safety for our staff and for the public. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation. We'll start with the Conservative caucus. Mr. Bailey?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you very much for your presentation today. So the ability to do these locates, the One Call—you've talked about the ease of administration in the office, where you could make the one phone call when you're sending a crew out on the road. So this would typically add 5%, 10%, 15% to the cost of any of these jobs that you're doing for the general public?

Mr. Peter Lamb: Not to the overall cost of the job, but to the cost of the supervisory portion of the work, which might constitute 30% of the work or so.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Somebody else mentioned before—and I know this is not part of your purview, but I did want to get it on the record that there would be no people necessarily losing employment. I know this isn't really in your purview, but I did want to get it on the record that service providers—the former presenter put that as a question; I didn't have the opportunity to respond. But all Bill 8 calls for is the setting up of a call centre. I think that's your understanding as well. Now, who is going to provide that service to actually do the locates would be up to the local municipalities. It would also be up to the utilities. But the One Call centre would only provide the one call that the individual—like, Bob Bailey would make a phone call to One Call, and then it would be up to One Call to send those calls out. So if a municipality, for example, or a utility chose to use a certain provider that had been providing that service before, as long as they met those standards and those quality checkpoints, they would be allowed to do that. That's my understanding.

Mr. Peter Lamb: I don't think there's anything in the act to preclude that from possibility.

Mr. Robert Bailey: The other issue—do I have a couple more minutes?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Briefly.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Take my time, Bob. Go ahead.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you very much.

There was talk about the fee. Maybe you can't speak specifically to this. There was a one-time fee, but I understand that One Call, to get this going and to encourage safety and membership, has waived that fee for municipalities. I know you work with a number of municipalities, so I would also like to get on the record that municipalities would have the fee waived, Mr. Chairperson, so it would encourage them to join up to do the mapping, and One Call would take any of this mapping, in any shape or form. It doesn't have to be to certain standards. They know that some municipalities, some providers, might not have the same expertise as others, and it's my understanding that One Call would take that mapping and they would take the time and the effort, because they feel this is so important to get it into the mapping database.

Mr. Peter Lamb: I guess something like that would have to be a regulation under the act. It would have to be laid out.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Also, I think One Call currently represents—I think the last numbers I've seen were between 130 and 140 members in Ontario, representing over 700 infrastructure agencies. I think 60% of Ontarians presently live in municipalities already under One Call purview. So we're talking about that other 40%. As significant as that is, I think it's important that we move towards that, and I know that we're going to have opportunities. If you've got any other input on that, I'd like to hear from you today. I think it's so important, and I'd like to hear you speak to that.

Mr. Peter Lamb: I don't think I really have the background sufficiently to answer that properly.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay, I'll just keep talking. The safety aspect of it: It's my understanding that almost \$40 million a year in damages have happened in Ontario because of near misses, strikes with either gas, utility, or telecommunications facilities. I think of a time that someone could be lying on a hospital gurney having surgery done by microsurgery—there could unfortunately be that incident where a telecommunications cable could be struck. That individual, for a few minutes—it could be longer than that—could be out of connection with a hospital somewhere. In this day and age, we have surgeons, maybe in Toronto, advising somebody back in Sarnia-Lambton or in the municipality of London and possibly one of our other ridings as well. This would alleviate that, whether it's a survey stake being driven into the ground or a backhoe doing an excavation on a pipeline.

Mr. Peter Lamb: I was speaking to someone from Waterloo hydro, and I understand, for critical infrastructure such as hospitals, they often have redundant systems in place, so it can be switched over in case one is damaged. I'm not sure if the telcos have the same system in place, but they might.

I know that there was an incident in Quebec a few years ago where a surveyor did strike a gas line. The gas was not released right away, but I believe some earth-grading equipment hit the bar later and gas seeped underground, and I believe at least one new house under construction was destroyed in that case.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Is my time up?

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Yes—your time and his time and the NDP caucus time and Ms. Campbell's time.

We're going to move on. Mr. Dickson, go ahead.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Just one question, Mr. Chair, if I may: I'd like to go back to where I was about three quarters of an hour ago, particularly to the reference of cost—

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Mr. Dickson, just in the microphone, if you could. Thank you. Perfect.

Mr. Joe Dickson: My wife says I talk too soft.

First of all, there's certainly real potential here in Bill 8. There's a cost saving. There's a safety factor—I want Tony, who was on much earlier, to get his digger, Alex, home safe and sound—and there's a better productivity scenario here.

I had some concern for the gentleman from northern Ontario, Larry Herbert, because that's something we have to find out and get an answer to. But we need to

find out and get some answers to the business side of this and the municipal or government side of this, because a lot of things aren't making sense. If municipalities aren't agreeing—AMO, which is the spokesperson for all municipalities in Ontario, has some concerns. In any business, like my business, if the entire cost of the product dropped—and it should, in this case—then you'd take that saving and pass it on to the end-user, the consumer, and they are the winners. We're the winners because in business we've got better productivity and a higher revenue from that.

To me, it's just a win-win situation, but we do need some of those answers. I realize that you're a professional, sir, and that may not be your particular forte, but somewhere down the road, if we can get those answers, it would be nice to have something positive go forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much. We appreciate your time today.

Mr. Peter Lamb: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay, folks. That's all the presentations for today. Thanks for your indulgence. I appreciate all of the presentations and the comments today. We will continue after constituency week. Committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1751.

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