



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

David Schneider, MLA

Little Bow

February 8, 2019

Mr. Aaron Roth, Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship
3rd Floor, 9820-107 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5K 1E7

Re: Invitation to Make a Written Submission

I was pleased to have the opportunity to sponsor Bill 211: *Alberta Underground Infrastructure Notification System Consultation Act*, and I would like to thank the Alberta Common Ground Alliance for their advocacy and support.

My bill would require the government to study the value of and how best to establish a mandatory underground infrastructure notification system. In short, owners would be required by law to register their underground infrastructure and respond in a timely and accurate manner to locate requests made by companies or individuals that will be excavating near their infrastructure.

Not only is such a system likely to enhance the safety of workers and residents, but it would help prevent damage to infrastructure and save massive costs that are incurred when lines are hit. Right now companies are operating in a framework where legal responsibilities and roles are not clear. Numerous companies and organizations have reached out to me with concerns about the status quo.

Because such a system would affect multiple government departments and jurisdictions, my bill was not ready to be prescriptive and provide all the necessary details for an effective, functioning system. While the province of Ontario provides us with a legislative model to guide us, I have heard concerns about the enforcement of their legislation, and that is one piece where Alberta may need to take a different path than Ontario.

There is an inherent conflict when an organization responsible for fulfilling the requirements of an Act is also the organization responsible for compliance with it. An independent study commissioned by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario called *Improving Ontario's One Call System: How to achieve more timely utility*

locates by applying enforcement practices used in other jurisdictions provides a helpful analysis that will no doubt be of use to a committee as it explores how best to proceed in Alberta.

More consultation and research is required to get this legislation right, which is why my bill calls for a committee to complete an extensive consultation within one year of the bill coming into force and then report back to the Legislative Assembly to take action.

Lastly, I wish to be forthcoming that in 2004, a report prepared by Alberta Municipal Affairs – Safety Services recommended that a new statute was not warranted but that the province should continue to encourage voluntary participation in Alberta's one call system. I would proffer that we are continuing to hear stories of infrastructure being hit, and new infrastructure continues to be added underground.

It is time for the idea of establishing a mandatory underground notification system in Alberta to be examined by a committee of the legislature. I would like to express my gratitude to all of my colleagues for their consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. Above the box, there are handwritten initials that appear to be 'DS'.

David Schneider, MLA