



Power & Communication Contractors Association

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Re: Support for the Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Subcommittee Chairman Latta, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Castor:

On behalf of the Power & Communication Contractors Association (PCCA),¹ I write in strong support of the committee's efforts to advance the Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 9338)² during the committee's June 24 markup session.³

PCCA is a national trade association representing contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers who build and repair America's power and communication infrastructure, including broadband and electric transmission, distribution, and substation facilities. PCCA members comprise roughly 85% of the construction entities performing broadband deployment and the majority of electric power infrastructure projects across the United States. Workforce and public safety are a central concern for PCCA members and the underground utility construction community.

Unmarked, inaccurately mapped, or improperly located underground water, sewer, power, broadband, communications, and pipeline infrastructure pose significant safety risks to communities and PCCA contractor employees across the United States.

¹ <https://www.pccaweb.org/about>.

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/9338>

³ Markup of Eight Bills on Electricity and Pipeline Safety. June 24, 2026. <https://energycommerce.house.gov/events/energy-subcommittee-markup-of-eight-bills-on-electricity-and-pipeline-safety>.

Accidental third-party utility strikes—including underground pipelines—cost the U.S. economy at least \$30 billion annually,⁴ threaten America’s energy, water/sewer, and communications infrastructure, disrupt local businesses and communities, and pose a serious safety threat to the environment and the public.

The unprecedented demand for energy infrastructure, coupled with forthcoming investments in underground broadband fiber projects as a result of the \$42.5 billion U.S. Department of Commerce’s Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program,⁵ will significantly increase underground utility construction activity, heightening the risk of accidental third-party utility strikes unless damage prevention policies keep pace with this growth.

Support for Section 9 – Excavation Damage Prevention

PCCA strongly supports the committee’s inclusion of underground utility excavation damage prevention provisions in Section 9⁶ of the Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026. These provisions appropriately direct states to adopt, or demonstrate progress toward adopting, leading practices⁷ in their damage prevention notification programs as part of the criteria PHMSA considers for damage prevention grants.

Section 9 strengthens PHMSA’s evaluation of state damage prevention laws by:

- Emphasizing effective, consistent enforcement of state one-call laws;
- Encouraging examination and limitation of exemptions that weaken compliance; and
- Promoting adoption of leading practices that improve locate accuracy and underground asset visibility.

From the perspective of PCCA members, consistent enforcement and reduced exemptions are particularly important. Uneven compliance standards and carve-outs in state law create risk exposure on jobsites and undermine the safety culture that responsible contractors uphold. Clear, uniformly enforced rules applicable to operators, locators, and excavators are essential to protecting workers and the public and ensuring a level playing field across jurisdictions.

Improved damage prevention policies benefit all stakeholders, helping reduce project delays, prevent expensive emergency repairs, and enhance overall infrastructure reliability.

⁴ Data from the Common Ground Alliance, a non-profit organization leading efforts to reduce damages to underground utilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Visit www.commongroundalliance.com. PCCA is a member of CGA and the related Damage Prevention Action Center: <https://damagepreventionactioncenter.com/>.

⁵ <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program>.

⁶ See Sec. 9. Excavation Damage Prevention:

https://d1dth6e84htgma.cloudfront.net/H_R_9338_Pipeline_Safety_Authorization_Act_of_2026_68e19fcc7d.pdf#page=22.

⁷ Review the Common Ground Alliance’s 2024 DIRT Report, Recommendations for Breaking Through the Damage Prevention Plateau, which confirms that enforcement of state damage prevention laws is essential to reduce dig-ins to buried infrastructure:

<https://dirt.commongroundalliance.com/2024-DIRT-Report/Recommendations-for-Breaking-Through-the-Damage-Prevention-Plateau>.

Strengthening state damage prevention frameworks and modernizing locate practices will lower costs and risks associated with underground construction and help ensure that critical utility infrastructure is protected throughout its life cycle.

For these reasons, a broad coalition of stakeholders and bipartisan lawmakers have supported similar excavation damage prevention provisions in other legislation concerning PHMSA's pipeline safety program.⁸

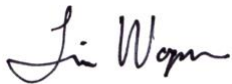
Congress should seize this opportunity to strengthen underground utility damage prevention policies. Without continued progress, underground pipeline and utility infrastructure projects may face avoidable damage, delays, and increased costs, placing workers and communities at unnecessary risk. The proactive safety framework outlined in Section 9 will help safeguard taxpayer investments in critical infrastructure and enhance the reliability of America's energy and communications networks.

PCCA appreciates the committee's leadership in advancing meaningful excavation damage prevention reforms. We encourage the committee to move expeditiously to advance the Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026 and to maintain clear statutory direction for PHMSA with respect to damage prevention program evaluation and enforcement standards.

PCCA and its members stand ready to provide technical expertise and field-level insight as this legislation progresses.

Thank you for your continued leadership on infrastructure safety and underground utility protection.

Sincerely,



Tim Wagner
President & CEO
Power & Communication Contractors Association

⁸ See Sec. 211 on page 25 of the PIPELINE Safety Act of 2025 (S. 2975): <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/47222F2D-A20D-4B19-A4E6-2888C63414DA#page=25>, and Section 18 of the Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2025 (H.R. 5301): <https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr5301/BILLS-119hr5301ih.pdf#page=41>.