Committee Members
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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

March 25, 2011

The Honorable Phil Rockefeller
23rd Legislative District
218 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40423
Olympia, WA 98504-0423

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

RE: HB 1634

While the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety supports House Bill 1634 and the effort to clarify and improve enforcement of the state's underground utility damage prevention law, we are concerned with any effort to limit the application of the current "call before you dig" requirement.

In particular, the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety believes that the following actions pose a significant public safety risk unless underground utility locates are conducted:

1) Installing signs in new holes or existing holes that have been deepened beyond 12 inches;
2) Maintenance of roads and ditches, and
3) Agricultural tilling deeper than 12 inches.

Dialing "811" to request a utility locate is simple and free whereas removing soil without the knowledge of what is underneath and its depth can have grave consequences both immediately and in the long-term if a natural gas or hazardous liquid pipeline is damaged.

The committee appreciates your hard work in improving the state's damage prevention program and hope you are able to pass this legislation so that it can do a better job of protecting the public. The committee unanimously directed me to write this letter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ron Schmitt
Chair, Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

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