

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 656

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Safe Digging Month.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 18, 2024

Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Safe Digging Month.

Whereas, each year, the underground utility infrastructure of the United States, including pipelines, electric, gas, telecommunications, fiber, water, sewer, and cable television lines, is jeopardized by unintentional damage caused by those who fail to have underground utility lines located prior to digging;

Whereas some utility lines are buried only a few inches underground, making the lines easy to strike, even during shallow digging projects;

Whereas digging prior to having underground utility lines located often results in unintended consequences, such as service interruption, environmental damage, personal injury, and even death;

Whereas the month of April marks the beginning of the peak period during which excavation projects are carried out around the United States;

Whereas, in 2002, Congress required the Department of Transportation and the Federal Communications Commission to establish a 3-digit, nationwide, toll-free number to be used by State “One Call” systems to provide information on underground utility lines;

Whereas, in 2005, the Federal Communications Commission designated “811” as the nationwide “One Call” number for homeowners and excavators to use to obtain information on underground utility lines before conducting excavation activities (referred to in this preamble as the “One Call/811 program”);

Whereas the nearly 4,200 damage prevention professionals who are members of the Common Ground Alliance, States, the “One Call”/811 program, and other stakeholders who are dedicated to ensuring public safety, environmental protection, and the integrity of services, promote the national “Contact 811 Before You Dig” campaign to increase public awareness about the importance of homeowners and excavators contacting 811 to find out the location of underground utility lines before digging;

Whereas the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–90; 125 Stat. 1904) affirmed and expanded the “One Call”/811 program by eliminating exemptions given to local and State government agencies and their contractors regarding notifying “One Call”/811 centers before digging;

Whereas, according to the 2022 Damage Information Reporting Tool Report published by the Common Ground Alliance in September 2023—

(1) “No notification to the 811 center” remains the number 1 top root cause of damage;

(2) failure to notify 811 prior to digging contributed to 25 percent of damages; and

(3) landscaping, fencing, water, sewer, and construction are the top types of work performed when professionals cause no-notification damages; and

Whereas the Common Ground Alliance has designated April as “National Safe Digging Month” to increase awareness of safe digging practices across the United States and to celebrate the anniversary of the designation of 811 as the national “Contact Before You Dig” number: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of National
3 Safe Digging Month;

4 (2) encourages all homeowners and excavators
5 throughout the United States to contact 811 by
6 phone or online before digging; and

7 (3) encourages all damage prevention stake-
8 holders to help educate homeowners and excavators
9 throughout the United States about the importance
10 of contacting 811 to have the approximate location
11 of buried utilities marked with paint or flags before
12 digging.

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