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House of Representatives

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

MEMORANDUM

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TO: ALL HOUSE MEMBERS

FROM: REP. MATTHEW BAKER

DATE: AUGUST 22, 2011

RE: PA One Call System (PA Underground Utility Protection Law)

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation that will amend Pennsylvania's Underground Utility Protection Law of 1974.

The Pennsylvania Underground Utility Protection Law was established to protect the public health and safety by preventing excavation and demolition work from damaging underground lines used in providing electricity, communication, gas, oil delivery, sewage, water or other service. In accordance with this law, excavators, contractors, plumbers, builders, designers and the general public must contact the One Call System prior to disturbing the earth. One Call then notifies any facility owner of the work and requires those facility owners to properly mark the location of their facilities. Currently, gathering lines are not covered by the law. Gathering lines are pipelines that transport oil or natural gas from the wellhead to a transmission line.

The natural gas industry is rapidly growing in Pennsylvania as a result of large reserves located in the Marcellus Shale region. As a result, gathering lines are becoming more prevalent, and in an effort to prevent damage to underground utility infrastructure and assure public safety and environmental protection, I am introducing a bill that will include these lines in the Pennsylvania Underground Utility Protection Law, and likewise in the state's One Call System. This is important because if a pipeline is damaged, natural gas could escape causing fires, explosions, or asphyxiation. In addition, delivery of vital natural gas supplies for home heating and other essential uses could be disrupted.

If you would like to join me in sponsoring this legislation which I believe is necessary to protect the public and facility employees from personal injury and will also ensure safe delivery of natural gas in the Commonwealth, please contact Gina Strine in my Harrisburg office at 772-5769 or via email at Gstrine@pahousegop.com.