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On Behalf of the National Utility Locators Association (Nulca)

Before Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee

Hearing on: House Bill 227: Relating to the time frame required for excavation notification and other modifications to the excavation requirements.

November 4, 2025

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee and submit comments in support of Representative Blasdel and Representative Johnson's bill HB 227. My name is Nancy Mitchell and I am the Vice President for Government Affairs with USIC the nation's largest utility locating company.

Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, USIC is the leading provider of underground public utility locating (811) services, with operations across 48 states. Our team of more than 10,000 technicians is dedicated to protecting the underground infrastructure of the more than 1,400 utilities and municipalities we serve nationwide.

I am also writing on behalf of Nulca-representing utility locating throughout North America. Nulca works closely with utilities and excavators to prevent utility damages as well as to promote safety and enhanced communication. We work to promote professional locating from the individual technician to the largest companies such as USIC.

USIC operates in Ohio with over 360 dedicated locate technicians focused on protecting Ohioans and the critical utility infrastructure that keeps our daily lives moving. Ohio has beautiful skylines, countryside, lakes, and small-town main streets, but its beauty runs deeper. What is below the surface is millions of miles of underground infrastructure such as the communication lines that connect us, the water that flows through our daily lives, and the gas and electricity that give us our power. At USIC and Nulca, we think this is worth protecting. So, every day in this State thousands of us are out in force locating, marking, mapping and safeguarding this invisible network that unites us all.

I have had the opportunity to work across the country with state lawmakers, regulators, utility partners, excavators, and contractors to systematically update dig laws to improve the operating environment for locate requests and marks to ensure 811 systems continue to communicate and receive each opportunity to protect infrastructure prior to construction.

I want to thank Representative Blasdel and Representative Johnson for introducing House Bill 227 to address the needed updates to the dig law and modernize the 811-notification system.

I am thankful the Senate Public Utilities Committee is hearing this bill today and I appreciate the support of Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Reineke and Ranking Member DeMora. USIC strongly supports this bill and is neutral on the proposed amendments being considered today.

Through the leadership of OHIO811, the State has continued to update the code and continuously focuses on moving the industry forward. The changes in this bill will ensure that all facility owners in the state participate in the 811 system which will improve damage prevention through more excavator confidence that the system is truly a “one-call” notification system.

In addition, Ohio remains one of only four states using the 48-hour notification system, while 46 other states have modernized or are currently in the process of modernizing their notification requirements.

Data shows that states using a two-day notification system results in higher on-time performance compared to those using the 48-hour system. In fact, USIC shows that this change could have 15-20% better on time performance by this simple change alone. The primary cause of excavation damage remains failure to submit notification requests, and this important update is one step towards a more streamlined process ensuring that more notifications are made prior to excavation.

The bill maintains all other existing safety and coordination requirements. This minor but impactful change would modernize Ohio’s excavation notification system while maintaining robust safety standards and improving operational efficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. Thank you for keeping Ohio one of the safest places to dig.