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February 15, 2022

The Honorable Delores Kelley  
Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Support for SB 464 – Underground Facilities Damage Prevention - Enforcement**

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the members of Choptank Electric Cooperative, I write in support of SB 464, Underground Facilities Damage Prevention – Enforcement, introduced by Senators Feldman and Hershey. This bill restores the authority of the Maryland Underground Facilities Damage Prevention Authority to impose certain enforcement measures on a person that performs excavation or demolition without providing required notice.

Under current law, a person must initiate a ticket request by notifying the one-call system serving the geographic area where the excavation or demolition is to be performed. The one-call system promptly transmits a copy of the ticket to all owner-members in the area and MDOT, if work is to be performed in the state right-of-way. Members must clear the ticket in 2-days. This means they must mark the existence of underground lines and/or report that none exist. The person who initiated the ticket may conduct work for 12 business days after it clears.

Current law provides civil penalties ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for violators. This bill restores the Authority's ability to require - instead or in addition to civil penalties - that a violator participate in damage prevention training or implement procedures to mitigate the likelihood of damage to underground facilities or impose other similar measures. The bill is an "emergency" measure; requires 3/5 votes of both houses; and becomes effective upon enactment.

Outages due to accidental line cuts are dangerous, expensive and cause considerable harm to our members who are without service during the unplanned repair time. In 2021 alone, our locate contractor reports that they performed 34 damage investigations on our system. Eight of them - 23.5% - were at locations where no call was made, and no ticket was issued through the clearance system. SB 464 provides one more avenue for the Authority to help protect electric lines and uninterrupted electric service to Maryland residents. Choptank Electric Cooperative supports SB 464 and urges a favorable report.

Sincerely,

VALERIE T. CONNELLY  
Vice President of Government Affairs & PR

