



December 21, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United State Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United State Senate  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

The Distribution Contractors Association (DCA) represents contractors, suppliers and manufacturers who provide distribution construction services including installation, replacement and rehabilitation of gas distribution pipelines in communities across the country. DCA supports the omnibus/Covid-19 relief package and we encourage Congress to pass this legislation as soon as possible. DCA especially appreciates the inclusion of language that would reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), a key federal agency that oversees all sectors of America's natural gas and oil pipeline network.

Pipeline safety reauthorization is long overdue, as the nation's pipeline safety program expired in October 2019. After a year of delays and a wide range of policy disputes, DCA is encouraged to see pipeline safety included in the omnibus. We fully support provisions that would require operators of gas distribution pipelines to "identify and manage traceable, reliable, and complete records, including maps and other drawings," and language that will ensure that this documentation is "accessible to all personnel responsible for performing or overseeing relevant construction or engineering work."

DCA supports several fundamental pillars of underground facility damage prevention to underground facilities during excavation activities. These pillars include mandatory participation in the one-call process (both one-call notification *and membership*); accurate and timely locating of underground facilities prior to excavation; and "potholing" by excavators so that underground facilities are exposed in order to determine their exact location. The recordkeeping requirements described above will take important steps to bolster pipeline safety and provide for safer excavation construction worksites.

DCA also appreciates intent to address the importance of pipeline safety management systems (SMS) in the pipeline safety language without including mandated SMS approaches. Like most in the pipeline construction industry, DCA supports the concept of pipeline SMS and we are doing our part to implement SMS in the pipeline construction industry. Finally, DCA is pleased to see language that would hold those who commit crimes during pipeline protests accountable.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Darden", written in a cursive style.

Rob Darden  
Executive Vice President