



GARY ALAN HEBL
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

September 26, 2019

Chairman Kuglitsch and Members of the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities,

Thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 349, regarding the applicability of requirements of the one-call system, commonly referred to as Digger's Hotline.

On July 10, 2018, a gas line in downtown Sun Prairie was struck, causing an evacuation of the area. About 40 minutes after emergency crews responded, the gas line exploded. The explosion occurred because the gas lines had been incorrectly marked by USCI, an Indiana-based utility locating service. In addition, the subcontractor, VC Tech, did not contact Digger's Hotline, because they were told by the main contractor, Bear Communications, that it had already been done. This breakdown in communication and proper line locating led to the death of a Sun Prairie Volunteer Firefighter, injuries to two others, and leveled several businesses and houses in downtown Sun Prairie.

AB349 is not a complicated bill. It simply clarifies who must contact Digger's Hotline before excavation. It affirms that subcontractors must also contact Digger's Hotline on their own in order to get lines located and seeks to prevent "piggy-backing" on other line location requests.

We have spent the better part of the last 14 months talking with constituents and utility companies to come up with ideas on how to best prevent another situation like we had in Sun Prairie. Our goal is to prevent any communication failures or confusion and ensure that lines get correctly located without adding new regulations that will overburden the one-call system or contractors. We believe this bill threads that needle. It adds no additional hoops to jump through; it simply clarifies what should be happening anyway.

Thank you very much for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

Assembly Bill 349: relating to applicability of one-call system requirements.

Testimony of State Representative Tyler Vorpagel

Assembly Committee on Energy & Utilities

September 26, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Kuglitsch, Ranking Member Meyers and committee members, for your time listening to testimony on Assembly Bill 349.

Last summer Sun Prairie had an explosion when a gas line ruptured and led to the death of a volunteer firefighter and injuries two two others while leveling several businesses in the downtown portion. This tragedy should have never happened, but the main contractor told the subcontractor they had already contacted Digger's Hotline.

Earlier this year I was contacted by Representative Hebl to be a co-author of this legislation that defines who must contact Digger's Hotline before excavation. This is a good bill that will help bring clarification to who needs to be contacting Digger's Hotline so we can avoid such tragedies in the future.



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony
Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities
September 26, 2019

Thank you Chairman Kuglitsch and members of the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities.

Sorry I could not be with you today. Despite not being present, I wanted to express my support for Assembly Bill 426.

It is an inherent right of people everywhere to peacefully assemble and ask for a redress of grievances from their government and, on a broader principle, from other actors in our society, including businesses. Let me say that again, it is their right to PEACEFULLY assemble.

Furthermore, we should consider that there also exists the inherent right to private property, and that right is not secondary to the rights of those who wish to voice their concerns.

Those who wish to peacefully voice their concerns are not harmed by this bill, but those who would seek to infringe upon the rights of others by trespassing and vandalizing will be subject to penalty of law, and rightfully so.

I will support this common-sense legislation as it protects the constitutional rights of all parties involved.