



**Remarks as Prepared for PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman  
Ohio Damage Prevention Summit  
Wednesday, April 10, 2013**

Thank you and good morning.

Before I begin, I'd like to send my sincere thanks to Roger Lipscomb and the Ohio Utilities Protection Service for hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Ohio Damage Prevention Summit, and for your 41-year commitment to safety.

To Ohio State Senator Bill Coley, as well as everyone at the Common Ground Alliance: thank you for your continual leadership on safety and utility damage prevention.

My name is Cynthia Quarterman, and I lead the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Let me start by, congratulating Ohio Senator Coley, the Ohio General Assembly, the Legislative Coalition at the Ohio Utilities Protection Service, and everyone who advocated for Ohio House Bill 458!

This is the first time in 22 years that Ohio's damage prevention law has been updated to create a stronger, more seamless One Call system.

A stronger One Call system means better protection for our utility and construction workers, as well as for everyday Americans.

Secretary Ray LaHood, who was scheduled to be here today, regrets that he could not attend today's Summit, but has asked me to read his letter to everyone here today:

To the Ohio Utilities Protection Service, Common Ground Alliance, State Senator Bill Coley, honored guests and all safety partners at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ohio Damage Prevention Summit—

Congratulations!

I regret that I am not with you today, but send my sincerest appreciation to each of you who is working so hard to raise awareness about safe digging. We heard about the good work you're doing in Ohio, and this Administration shares your commitment to safe and

efficient transportation infrastructure, including underground pipelines. They are vital to the economy and to keeping America moving.

At this very moment, pipelines are transporting energy from Texas to Virginia to right here in Ohio. As natural gas production continues to grow, pipeline infrastructure will expand, too. Today, there are already 2.6 million miles of pipelines that we need to protect, not just for the sake of the economy, but also for the American public and our environment.

The bottom line is that a leading cause of serious pipeline incidents is excavation damage—someone accidentally hitting a pipeline. And almost every one of these incidents could have been prevented with a call to the nationwide toll-free digging hotline, 8-1-1. Every single person at this Summit is playing a crucial role helping to educate the public about preventing excavation damage.

This month, as part of National Safe Digging Month, we are asking Americans everywhere to follow your lead and tell their friends and family about calling 8-1-1 before they dig. It's a perfect time to practice safe digging, as the weather warms up and people focus on home improvement and gardening projects. Safe digging always starts with a call to 8-1-1 two to three days before digging on or around property.

Protecting our nation's infrastructure starts at the local level with leaders like you, and that is why we need events like the Ohio Damage Prevention Summit all across the country. You are setting an example that we will share as we move forward raising awareness about safe digging.

Thank you for your leadership, your commitment to safety and for all you're doing to help spread the safe digging message throughout the entire state of Ohio.

Continue to keep up the good work and congratulations again! Always Know What's Below; Call 8-1-1 Before You Dig!

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood

On that note, let's give a round of applause to the organizers, sponsors, and participants at today's Damage Prevention Summit!

I want to reiterate the importance of America's pipeline transportation infrastructure, and how it fits into damage prevention.

Each and every day, people across the country depend on safe and reliable transportation infrastructure, and that includes underground pipelines.

In Ohio alone, there are more than 72,000 miles of pipelines, which is enough to wrap around the Earth not once, not twice, but nearly *three* times!

You can be sure that a pipeline transported the energy products used throughout Ohio.

But, for most people, pipelines remain out of sight and out of mind.

Today, we are all here because we have a common belief: damage prevention is a *shared* responsibility.

From the Positive Response system to Ohio's Universal Marking Standards, Ohio House Bill 458 centers on an essential part of any safety effort—communication.

Like Secretary LaHood, I am asking each and every one of you to *communicate* this simple message to your friends, colleagues and family: "Know What's Below; Call 8-1-1 Before You Dig."

Whenever you see those colored flags and paint, recognize that someone called 8-1-1 ahead of time.

Not only can that call save lives, it can also help you avoid service outages and property damage.

And there's already good news.

In the six years since the debut of 8-1-1, the number of serious digging-related pipeline incidents has decreased by more than 45 percent!

That would not have happened without state partners like you who promote safe digging.

This year, 3 in 10 homeowners plan to dig on their property for an outdoor improvement project; some of them are bound to be our friends and family.

Throughout this month, please share the 8-1-1 Safe Digging Month banner. Post it around your neighborhoods and on your websites. Bring it up in conversations about do-it-yourself backyard projects. *However* you communicate, make sure to tell everyone you know to Call 8-1-1 Before they Dig.

At the Transportation Department we have made real progress in improving pipeline safety nationwide.

Under the federal Pipeline Safety Act of 2011, the Department is stepping up our enforcement efforts, and cutting red tape so that pipeline operators make smart investments to improve infrastructure and create jobs.

Domestic oil and natural gas production have increased each year since 2008, and we need safe and reliable pipeline infrastructure to transport it.

That means that we will have more work to do to prevent pipeline damage.

In the meantime, please help us spread the “Call 8-1-1” message.

Calling 8-1-1 before digging is simple, free, it can save your life and, thanks for your hard work, it is the law.

Congratulations on the new damage prevention law.

Let’s keep up the good work together!

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