



Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association

Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay Districts

P.O. Box 10308, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8

Phone/Fax (807) 683-6662

Website: www.noma.on.ca

E-mail: admin@noma.on.ca

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TO THE ATTENTION OF: ALL MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Dear Member of Provincial Parliament:

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) represents the interests of 37 municipalities from Kenora and Rainy River in the west to Hornepayne and Wawa in the east.

I am writing to express our concerns regarding Bill 8, *An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd.* and in particular our opposition to the legislation. This Act would require all municipalities in Ontario to join Ontario One Call Ltd. – a call centre that receives queries regarding the location of underground infrastructure; identifies whether underground infrastructure is located in the vicinity of a proposed excavation site; notifies members of proposed excavations that may affect underground infrastructure; and raises public awareness of the need for safe digging.

Our members do not believe that there is a need for Bill 8 and strongly believe that each municipality should have a choice as to how it wishes to manage infrastructure locates. Many municipalities across the Northwest currently provide infrastructure location services, either as a municipal service or by contract with private providers. This process is working well and deals with the needs of both the communities and the citizens who they represent.

We are concerned that this legislation creates an **unnecessary but mandatory monopoly** that will duplicate services that are already successfully provided by municipalities and private companies across Ontario. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the creation of a single provider system will result in higher fees due to a lack of competition.

Current locate-service providers have invested significant resources in the development of systems that meet specific local needs. These providers will be forced out of this service by the passage of this Private Members legislation with no consideration for economic impacts or job losses.

The legislation requires every municipality in Ontario to become a member of Ontario One Call Ltd within 12 months of the Act coming into force. The legislation further requires a member to “immediately...provide such information to the Corporation as is necessary for the Corporation

to identify the location of all underground infrastructure owned by the member.” NOMA is concerned that small communities may not have the capacity to provide this information without incurring significant additional costs to their municipality.

Furthermore, the legislation is ambiguous in that it does not indicate:

- who will be responsible to provide oversight;
- whether a fee will be charged to members in the absence of any service being provided; or,
- what penalties or fines will be charged for an offence.

In addition, the Act does not clearly indicate who would be liable in the event of a missed locate that results in damage.

NOMA is opposed to Bill 8 and we encourage you to vote against this legislation at all stages.

Sincerely,



Ron Nelson
President
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- c. Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
NOMA members
Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce
Construction Association of Thunder Bay
Northwestern Ontario Building & Construction Trades Council