



July 5, 2024

Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement
Public Safety and Operations Policy Branch
56 Wellesley St. West, 6th floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1C1

Submitted electronically

RE: 24-MPBSD010 – Consultation on potential circumstances where digging may continue beyond the locate validity period without having to request a new locate

On behalf of our collective construction industry members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed regulatory amendments. Our organizations have been engaged on improving the locate delivery process in Ontario for over a decade. We support the proposed regulation that we believe would have a positive impact on critical infrastructure and housing work in the province.

Eliminating the need for relocates on deep non-linear excavation sites will create notable efficiencies in the locate delivery system and help reduce the overall volume of locates in the system. Presently, companies on long-term, vertical excavation projects are required to call and receive relocates every 60 days. However, below a certain depth these relocates are unnecessary. We support the proposed elimination requesting a new locate once all utilities have been exposed and the general depth of excavation is one metre below the invert of the lowest utility.

We have consistently maintained that reducing the overall volume of locates in the system is key to improving the timely and predictable delivery of locates in Ontario. Eliminating the need for relocates on deep excavation work is one element of how this can be accomplished and is something that we have been steadfast advocates for. We are pleased to see the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement make progress on this initiative.

Furthermore, there are several other elements that we would like to the Ministry and Ontario One Call to address to improve the underground utility locates system in Ontario. These include:



A) Expand locate validity period

Dedicated locators are permitted to extend locate validity period beyond 60-days. There are many existing, low-risk opportunities where this should be permitted and encouraged. Industry would also recommend that private developers use dedicated locator on appropriate projects and recommend for the extension of validity period where practicable.

B) Simplify the sharing of locates among multiple contractors for the same job

Although the regulations currently allow for sharing, each contractor's name must be on the locate documents. One Call's current web based locate request system has a field for only one contractor. As such, the program should be updated and simplified to add a dropdown field for additional contractors, and regulations should be clear on liability.

C) Utilize and maximize the dedicated locator model

Dedicated locator can help utility companies address some of their operational cost concerns, though most municipalities and private owners do not understand the model fully and how it would be operationalized. The Ministry and Ontario One Call must develop a comprehensive, easy-to-understand communications and outreach campaign to ensure that industry and public owners can utilise the dedicated locator model to its full extent.

D) Create a Certified Locator Training Course

Lead the creation of a certified training program to allow excavation companies to train existing employees to refresh/remark/relocate on their own projects safely and legally. It is critical to note that this training program should not be included in the 144 existing skills trade classifications in the province of Ontario. Rather, this should be a training program recognized by utility owners to allow construction companies to train their own workers to locate utilities safely and legally, which will help reduce wait times for locators.

We appreciate the latest efforts by the Ministry and Ontario One Call to address long-standing concerns with the underground utilities locates process in the province. We are



pleased to see the positive collaboration and we look forward to continuing working to improve this vital system for the benefit of all Ontarians.

Sincerely,

Nadia Todorova
Executive Director
RCCAO

Patrick McManus
Executive Director
GTSWCA

Peter Smith
Executive Director
HCAT

Raly Chakarova
Executive Director
TARBA

Richard Lyall
President
RESCON

Copy to:

- Kai Nademi, Chief of Staff (Acting), Minister's Office, Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement
- Alex Piccini, Director of Stakeholder Relations, Minister's Office, Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement