

**Before the Senate Committee on Utilities**  
**Senate Bill 20**  
**Testimony of George R. Melling, Manager – Claims and Risk**  
**Kansas Gas Service, a Division of ONEOK, Inc.**  
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Chairman Emler and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you regarding this important issue. Kansas Gas Service is supportive of efforts by the legislature to enhance public safety including the reduction of damages and therefore exposure to risk arising from damage to underground facilities. Kansas Gas Service has long been a supporter of the Kansas One Call system as a means for all utility operators to make a joint effort to achieve these goals. During 2005 Kansas Gas Service recorded 1220 damages to our underground facilities. In 2006 this number rose to 1260. In each of these instances Company personnel had to control the escaping gas flow as quickly as possible in order to minimize risk to the public and themselves.

As outlined by Mr. Haynos the current Underground Damage Prevention Act excludes operators of sanitary sewer and potable water systems. These exclusions tend to undermine the intent of the law given the fact that in many areas of the State an excavator must make multiple calls to obtain information regarding the location of all buried facilities. As a result some excavators simply do not make the additional calls. This lack of information sometimes results in damage to underground facilities in addition to the potential risk and service interruptions to the public, the very ones the law is intended to protect.

In addition to operating our Distribution and Transmission systems, Kansas Gas Service is a major excavator in the State of Kansas, which means that our personnel are required to make additional calls every day attempting to insure all underground facilities have been located prior to beginning our work.

In summation Kansas Gas Service endorses efforts to improve public safety by strengthening the Underground Damage Prevention Act by including sanitary sewer and potable water system operators.

I am willing to take any questions you may have.