



January 18, 2007

To: Senate Utilities Committee

From: Tim Danneberg
City of Olathe

Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 20

The City of Olathe works very hard to ensure water and sewer services are as affordable as possible for customers. We recognize this is a cost that must be born by all residents, and we are proud to have very reasonable rates.

Avoiding the costs of repairing damaged sewers caused by digging is important as it could impact customers. However, one-call mandates proposed in SB 20 will not result in fewer damages but unnecessary rate increases for our customers.

Olathe continues to be one of America's fastest growing cities, and we experience a great deal of construction. However, problems with damage to city water and sewer utilities from digging are minimal. In fact between 2005 and 2006, there were only five known hits of lines, and in each case, the individual digging was already aware of the aware locations.

Based on that fact, one call mandates would have made no difference in Olathe other than forcing customers to pay more.

Other important information includes:

An estimated 50% of the Kansas One Call calls for locates are for locates in the back yard or for hand excavation, neither of which are going to damage water and or sewer facilities. However, the city would be charged Kansas One Call fees for these requests. This is based on experience from the City of Olathe Public Work (OPW) Department, which is required to participate in Kansas One Call for areas of the city that we have street lights and traffic signals.

Waterlines are constructed of materials that are not easily damaged by property owners digging in their yards and are buried 3.5 feet deep, which is deeper than property owners are digging to plant a tree, till a garden or erect a fence. Sewer lines are typically 8+ feet deep and are in a straight line between visible

manholes. And, water and sewer facilities do not present near the safety hazard as electrical utilities.

The City of Olathe strongly opposes this unfunded mandate. It will increase costs to ratepayers, add bureaucracy and have little to no return for customers.