

February 18, 2025

Minnesota State Capitol  
House, Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee  
Room G3  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: House File 47  
Modifying provisions governing the certification of underground telecommunications installers

Dear Chair Baker, Rep. Schultz, and members of the committee,

CenterPoint Energy is Minnesota's largest natural gas utility. We proudly serve 920,000 residential and business customers with safe, reliable and resilient energy solutions through approximately 14,000 miles of pipelines. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

CenterPoint Energy has concerns on House File 47, as we have seen a substantial increase in strikes from broadband installation and see merit in the education and certification that this statute established.

We have strong concerns with striking lines 1.20 – 2.1. The amount of telecommunication installation is growing rapidly, and so is the damage from installation. Without safety certification requirements, the damages will continue to increase.

Additional concerns with adding the language found on lines 2.1 and 2.2, as there should not be an exemption regardless of depth. Utility infrastructure can be present at any depth. While each are installed at certain depths, the depth can change over time due to erosion or grade changes. Safely hand digging to find the facilities before crossing them, regardless of depth, is required. Having safety-qualified personnel helps reduce the risk of damage.

CenterPoint Energy appreciates the conversation started by the Minnesota Cable Communications Association and other stakeholders and agree there could be areas of compromise on training time requirements and clarification on number of qualified installers on a site. We look forward to being a part of these ongoing conversations.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jamie Fitzke  
CenterPoint Energy  
Director of Government Affairs

/s/

Crystal Gorres  
CenterPoint Energy  
Damage Prevention Manager