
WUC

Water Utility Council of the
PA-Section, American Water
Works Association (PA-AWWA)



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

From Gmerek Government Relations, Inc.

212 Locust Street ♦ Suite 300 ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17101 ♦ Phone: 717-234-8525 ♦ Cell: 717-574-3963 ♦ Fax:
717-234-8812 ♦ Erik A. Ross, Senior Lobbyist ♦ www.ggrgov.com

Harrisburg, PA

eross@ggrgov.com

April 4, 2016 -- Issue 981

*PA- Section, American Water Works Association
National Association of Water Companies
Water Works Operators' Association of Pennsylvania*

Legislators Join Cruz in Call for Support of Lead-testing Legislation

Citing the tragedy unfolding in Flint, Michigan, state Rep. Angel Cruz, D-Phila., was joined by a bipartisan group of legislators on March 22, 2016 calling for support of a legislation package that aims to reduce the risk of lead poisoning in Pennsylvania.

"It's unfortunate that the events in Flint had to bring the dangers of lead poisoning to the forefront, but the danger is real and it's impacting children in Pennsylvania," Cruz said. "Numerous cities across Pennsylvania, including Allentown, Altoona, Easton, Erie, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, among others, are dealing with elevated blood lead levels in children at a higher rate than what we've seen in Flint. The risk of permanent damage to both their mental and physical health is too high to allow this to continue."

The first piece of legislation to be introduced by Cruz, [House Bill 1917](#), would require children under 6 to be tested for elevated lead levels in their blood. Currently, the U.S. Centers for Disease

Control recommends children be tested at 1, 2 and again before 6.

"Out of over 1 million children in Pennsylvania under the age of 7, less than 15 percent were tested for lead exposure in 2014," Cruz said. "As legislators, we must work to increase testing, especially considering that the damage from lead poisoning is most severe in children under the age of 7."

The second piece of legislation, [House Bill 1918](#), would amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to require more frequent testing for lead in water. Under current law, water is tested every three years at a reduced number of sample sites after the initial passing. Cruz's legislation would require testing to be done annually at the reduced number of sample sites and a complete test from all sample sites every three years.

The third piece of legislation, [House Bill 1919](#) and sponsored by state Rep. Mike Schlossberg, D-Lehigh, would require lessors of residential dwellings built before 1978 to inspect dwellings for the presence of lead-based paint and hazardous conditions such as chipping paint when those dwellings become vacant or prior to new occupancy. Lessors must also disclose all information regarding levels of lead and inspection

results, and provide those findings to a lessee prior to occupancy.

"There are thousands of homes across the state that have layers of lead paint present, possibly without tenants' knowledge. Homeowners have the inspection process to give them peace of mind, but renters currently have no assurances about their residences," Schlossberg said. "This is especially troubling for families with young children, who are most at risk to negative consequences due to lead exposure. Parents have the responsibility to protect their children, but that could only be done if they are informed. My legislation would give parents the information they need, by informing renters about any lead risks present in their homes so they can protect their children."

Source: Rep. Cruz Press Release, 3/22/2016

Sen. Hughes, Democratic Senators Call for Statewide Task Force, More Testing to Determine Extent of PA's Lead Problem

With 18 Pennsylvania cities testing higher than Flint, Mich., for elevated blood lead levels, and a growing chorus of evidence indicating a worsening statewide lead problem, Sen. Democratic Appropriations Committee Chairman Vince Hughes, several of his Senate Democratic colleagues, and state health officials offered a focused course of action to better protect children and their families.

"Whether it's lead in the water or in the peeling paint that still clings to aging homes and school buildings, we believe we have a problem that will only grow worse if we do nothing to help now," Sen. Hughes said. "Our five-bill package today will help us get a better understanding of lead and how it is threatening generations of Pennsylvanians.

"The effect of lead is not reversible, and it's pretty serious," Hughes said. "Experts are talking about lead's potential relationship to learning

disabilities, autism, and behavioral health problems. We must do more to stop this trend."

Sens. John Yudichak (D-Luzerne), Art Haywood (D-Philadelphia), Shirley Kitchen (D-Philadelphia), Wayne Fontana (D-Allegheny) and Hughes are each sponsoring one bill in the five-bill package:

- Senate Bill ____ (Yudichak) would create a task force to study the scope of the lead issue, including an accounting of the age of the state's housing stock, pipelines, school buildings and day care centers. It would also study best practices and make recommendations.
- Senate Bill ____ (Haywood) would require every school building to be tested (water, paint, soil) for lead before a school year begins. Test results would be sent to parents of every enrolled child and posted on school district websites. If a school tests at lead levels higher than the Centers for Disease Control's acceptable amount, it would be required to submit a remediation plan to the state Department of Education.
- Senate Bill ____ (Kitchen) seeks to require lead testing (water, paint, soil) in day care centers licensed by the PA Department of Human Services. DHS would be prohibited from issuing a license to a day care operator if lead levels are higher than CDC recommended readings.
- Senate Bill ____ (Fontana) would require any agreement of sale for real property in the commonwealth to include an option to have the water tested for lead. And,
- Senate Bill ____ (Hughes) would create a "SuperFund for Lead Abatement" that could be used by schools, day care centers, and other organizations to defray lead remediation costs.
- **NOTE:** These bills have not yet been introduced and the numbers assigned to them in the press release were incorrect.

"In 2014, I sponsored legislation that was enacted to reduce the levels of lead in drinking water. It is a critical public health and

environmental issue. We need to be doing everything we can to reduce the public's exposure to lead," Sen. Yudichak said. "That is why I am introducing this legislation. This task force would look at all the pathways that the public can be exposed to lead and make recommendations as to how we can reduce the risk of lead exposure."

"Just like we have put mechanisms in place to alert residents about the presence of radon or lead-based paint, lead in water can be a safety concern, especially for families where a mother is pregnant, they are expecting, or young children and middle-age men and women reside," Sen. Fontana said about his legislation. "For between \$20 and \$50, that it is a small price to pay for peace of mind that your new home's drinking water is safe."

"When children consume lead their chances for healthy growth and a vibrant life dwindle," Sen. Kitchen said in explaining why she is pushing legislation. "Hurting children with avoidable problems is something we cannot allow as Pennsylvanians, and we must make sure that our babies and toddlers are not exposed to lead dangers in the one place they spend many hours: day care."

"We must do everything in our power to ensure that Pennsylvania's children are safe," Sen. Haywood underlined about his legislation. "Monitoring lead levels in our schools is a fundamental step we can take in that direction."

PA Department of Health Deputy Secretary for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Loren Robinson, MD, MSHP, spoke about the dangerous effects of lead exposure, as did Pennsylvania Public Interest Research Group Field Organizer Michael Roles.

While she was unable to attend the press conference, Dr. Marsha Gerdes from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia confirmed that lead is a problem and efforts like these must happen.

"Prevention of exposure to lead from old lead paint or lead-tainted water should be a priority across Pennsylvania, which has a high prevalence of older housing and water systems," said Gerdes, an early childhood psychologist at CHOP, as well as a senior psychologist at the hospital's PolicyLab. "It

is our youngest children who are at the highest risk of lead exposure due to drinking formula mixed with tainted water or inhaling paint dust as they crawl on the floor. For those children who already show elevated levels, we need to ensure that they are enrolled in the educational services or mental health services that can help them."

Source: Senator Hughes Press Release, 3/23/2016

Governor Wolf Outlines "Government that Works" Reform Plan

On March 17, 2016, Governor Wolf outlined his "Government that Works" Reform Plan which calls for the banning of gifts, contracting reform, increasing lobbying oversight, and increasing transparency.

"Since taking office, I've taken significant steps forward in making our government more open and transparent," said Governor Tom Wolf. "However, special interests still wield too much power and influence in Harrisburg, which is one of the reasons why it has been, and continues to be, broken. We need to take on the special interests and status quo, and that starts with passing a ban on gifts for all public officials, contracting reform, increasing lobbying oversight, and increasing transparency across all of government."

Last year, Governor Wolf took several actions to reform government in Pennsylvania and restore public trust in their government. He signed executive orders banning gifts and reforming legal contracting. He implemented policies of posting his calendar and expenses - along with the expenses of his cabinet secretaries - online. Today, Governor Tom Wolf is calling for a number of reforms that would increase transparency and accountability across all of state government.

Institute a gift ban for all public officials.

Governor Wolf is calling for a gift ban that applies across all of government and builds on his administration's executive order to ban gifts.

The governor's Gift Ban Executive Order prohibits executive branch employees from accepting gifts from any person who has business with or is regulated by the commonwealth.

Many boards and commissions – including the PLCB and the Turnpike Commission – have implemented a gift ban, but more action is needed to make a ban permanent and to apply it broadly across government in Pennsylvania government.

Pennsylvania is one of ten states with no specific law on limits on gifts to public officials, who are free to take any gift—including cash—so long as the gift is disclosed.

The priority for the governor is a gift ban that curtails the ability of special interests to influence public officials with gifts and restores public trust in their government. Regardless of what becomes law, the governor will keep his executive order in place, but he wants a law that allows a gift ban to exist past his administration.

Require disclosure of the amount of compensation received by public employees from outside employment and ban paid service on corporate boards.

In Pennsylvania, some public officials earn income outside of their duties in public service.

Officials are currently required to disclose sources of outside income, but not the amount paid, or any information about the work that was performed.

Governor Wolf wants to ensure all public employees disclose the amount of compensation they receive from outside employment, within specified bands.

Implement broader “pay-to-play” provisions requiring the disclosure of campaign contributions made by parties seeking contracts.

We also need new requirements related to disclosure of campaign donations in connection with state contracts.

The governor supports efforts that would require businesses that have been awarded contracts to disclose all political contributions made by its officers and employees during the preceding year. These disclosures would be posted on the Department of State website.

Fifteen states and the City of Philadelphia require disclosure of campaign contributions for those seeking public contracts. There have been several proposals in recent legislative sessions that would require companies bidding for state contracts to disclose campaign contributions and prohibit the awarding of a contract for specified types of procurement unless the contractor included with its bid response all contributions made in the past two years.

Increase the Department of State's ability to review lobbying disclosures and make referrals to the Ethics Commission.

Governor Wolf will increase staffing at the Department of State to crack down on lobbyists by randomly reviewing lobbying disclosure filings for completeness and accuracy. Lobbying disclosure auditors would be tasked with initial compliance oversight of all filed returns, and upon either a failure to disclose, or material defect in either the reporting requirements or expense accounting, the auditors would have authority to conduct further forensic audits of the lobbyist or principal's records to verify the accuracy of the information provided.

As required by the Lobbying Disclosure Law, every year the Department of State randomly selects 3% of all completed registrations and expense reports for audit by an outside CPA firm. The audit consists of finding any possible violations of the Lobbying Disclosure Act with respect to lobbying registrations and expenses, and includes compliance testing and financial review.

The results of these audits are exempt from the Right to Know Law and are not published, preventing the public from knowing whether lobbying laws have been violated. In addition to strengthening internal processes for detecting incomplete filings, the governor supports removal of this exemption.

In Maryland and Virginia, lobbying disclosure registrations and expense reports are reviewed upon receipt for compliance and accuracy by in-house legal and program staff. Initial discrepancies can trigger further review into past filings over the last few registration periods. In South Carolina, any failure to comply with the disclosure requirements may trigger an audit by that state's ethics commission.

Enact strong campaign finance reform.

Pennsylvanians need to have confidence that decisions made by their government are the product of a robust competition of ideas, not rewards for the special interests with the deepest pockets.

Governor Wolf supports strong campaign finance reform that would for the first time place limits on contributions to candidates seeking elected office, implement aggregate limits for races, place sensible restrictions on Political Action Committees (PACs), and strengthen reporting and disclosure requirements across the board. In addition, the prohibition of the use of campaign funds for personal expenses, including legal fees.

Pennsylvania is currently one of only twelve states that impose no contribution limits on individual donors. By enacting strong new campaign finance measures, we can help restore confidence in government, and curtail the role of campaign spending in our political process.

Source: Governor's Press Office, 3/17/2016

Start of Spring Brings Greater Risk of Flooding in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency is reminding citizens to practice flood safety during the start of the Spring weather.

"Flooding is the number one weather threat we face in Pennsylvania," said PEMA Director Richard D. Flinn Jr. "People need to understand that just a

few inches of water can knock over a person, and one to two feet of water can carry away most cars."

Flinn also said it is important for the public to understand the difference between a flood watch and a flood warning because each represents a different level of action to be taken. National Flood Safety Awareness Week is March 21-25 and is a good opportunity for the public to learn more about flood safety.

- A flood watch means that flooding may occur. Residents should stay alert and watch rivers and streams, and be prepared to move to high ground quickly.
- A flood warning means that there is actual flooding. Residents should act at once and move to high ground.

In addition, citizens should:

- learn whether your property is above or below the flood stage water level and become familiar with the history of flooding for your region;
- learn flood-warning signs and your community alert signals to be better prepared for floods and flash floods; and
- install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent flood waters from backing up in sewer drains.

Plan and practice an evacuation route. Individuals living or working in flash flood areas should have several alternative routes for leaving and getting to higher ground.

Have disaster supplies on hand in your home, including:

- flashlights and extra batteries;
- portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries;
- first aid kit and manual;
- bottled water and non-perishable food; · manual can opener;
- essential medicines/prescriptions; and

- cash, credit cards and important legal documents.

Develop an emergency communication plan in the event that family members are separated from one another during floods or flash floods - a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school - and have a plan for getting back together.

Free flood safety information, including templates for family emergency plans and checklists for emergency kit supplies, is available at www.ReadyPA.org. Follow @ReadyPA on Twitter and like ReadyPA on www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA for more emergency preparedness information. The free ReadyPA app is also available for both Apple and Android devices.

Source: PEMA Press Release, 3/21/2016

PennDOT Selects Team for Compressed Natural Gas Fueling Stations Public-Private Partnership; Stations to be Installed at 29 Transit Agency Sites Statewide

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Secretary Leslie S. Richards announced at a media event that the Trillium CNG team, which includes Larson Design Group of Williamsport, has been selected for the department's Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) transit fueling station Public-Private Partnership (P3) project.

Through the \$84.5 million project, Trillium will design, build, finance, operate and maintain CNG fueling stations at 29 public transit agency sites through a 20-year P3 agreement. Stations will be constructed over the next five years and the firm will also make CNG-related upgrades to existing transit maintenance facilities.

“The department is excited to partner on this project that will bring benefits for the state, our transit partners and the public for years to come,” Richards said. “The project’s aggressive schedule means that we’ll realize cost, environmental and operational benefits quickly.”

As part of Trillium’s proposal, CNG fueling will be accessible to the public at seven transit agency sites, with the option to add to additional sites in the future. PennDOT will receive a 15 percent royalty, excluding taxes, for each gallon of fuel sold to the public, which will be used to support the cost of the project. The team has guaranteed at least \$2.1 million in royalties over the term of the agreement.

PennDOT also expects transit agencies and the department to see significant savings due to the project. Based on current CNG, diesel and gasoline prices as well as fuel usage, agencies can save a total of more than \$10 million annually. Due to these expected savings, transit agencies’ sustainability is increased and dependency on state operational subsidies is reduced. After 10 years, the department estimates that the project will pay for itself with the estimated \$100 million in savings.

“With Pennsylvania’s natural gas resources, this project will not only bring efficiencies for transit agencies and the state, but we’re also helping establish a foothold for the CNG transportation market in areas that may not have seen this opportunity for some time,” Richards said.

Using the P3 procurement mechanism allows PennDOT to install the fueling stations faster than if a traditional procurement mechanism was used for each site, resulting in significant estimated capital cost savings of more than \$46 million.

“This is an exciting day for Pennsylvania as we connect vital citizen services with forward-looking infrastructure,” said Sen. John Wozniak, Johnstown, who participated in the event. “I’m also pleased that this project will start in our backyard so this region can quickly reap this partnership’s benefits.”

When the project is completed, the fueling stations will supply gas to more than 1,600 CNG buses at transit agencies across the state.

“I'm happy to be working with the administration in fulfilling the natural gas promise in making Johnstown the first natural gas public-private partnership,” said Rep. Bryan Barbin, Johnstown, who also joined the event.

Today's event was held at the Cambria County Transportation Authority's Johnstown facility. Trillium CNG, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, was recently acquired by Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc. of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

To learn more about this and other P3 projects visit www.P3forPA.pa.gov.

Note: A list of agencies participating in the P3 project, in order of construction-start timeline, follows:

- Cambria County Transportation Authority, Johnstown Facility (2016), includes public fueling.
- Centre Area Transportation Authority (2016)
- York Adams County Transportation Authority, York Facility (2016), includes public fueling.
- Mid Mon Valley Transportation Authority (2017)
- Cambria County Transportation Authority, Ebsensburg Facility (2017)
- Indiana County Transportation Authority (2017), includes public fueling.
- Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, Allentown Facility (2017)
- Westmoreland County Transportation Authority (2017)
- County of Lackawanna Transportation System (2017), includes public fueling.
- New Castle Area Transportation Authority (2017), includes public fueling.
- Altoona Metro Transit (2017)
- Beaver County Transportation Authority (2017), includes public fueling.
- Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, Easton Facility (2017)
- York Adams County Transportation Authority, Gettysburg Facility (2017)
- Luzerne County Transportation Authority (2017)
- Crawford Area Transportation Authority (2017)

- Erie Metropolitan Transportation Authority (2018), includes public fueling.
- County of Lebanon Transportation Authority (2018)
- Schuylkill Transportation System (2018)
- Monroe County Transportation Authority (2019)
- Area Transportation Authority of North Central PA, Bradford Facility (2019)
- Area Transportation Authority of North Central PA, Johnsonburg Facility (2019)
- Butler Transportation Authority (2019)
- Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (2019)
- Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation System (2019)
- DuBois, Falls Creek, Sandy Township Joint Transportation Authority (2020)
- Transit Authority of Warren County (2021)
- Capital Area Transit (2021)
- Port Authority of Allegheny County (2021)

Source: PennDOT Press Release, 3/28/2016

Wolf Administration Investing \$1.19 Million in Projects to Clean Up Acid Mine Drainage

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced the selection of 4 projects to receive \$1,193,603 in funding for the rehabilitation of Pennsylvania's water resources. The selected projects mitigate acid mine drainage (AMD) and support programs that improve water quality in watersheds, wetlands, and fisheries that have been impaired by AMD.

"The health of Pennsylvanians depends on the health of Pennsylvania's waterways" said Governor Wolf. "These grants will aid projects that are committed to protecting public health by eliminating acid mine drainage."

"Pennsylvania's history is inextricably linked to mining," said Secretary Quigley. "Unfortunately, acid mine drainage has also been a part of this

history. The investments we are making today are essential in correcting the errors of the past to restore water quality in our streams for generations to come."

Read [more](#).

Source: DEP News, 3/31/2016

DEP Participates in Drinking Water Emergency-Table-Top Exercise

DEP and the Environmental Protection Agency hosted a table-top exercise regarding a how both agencies respond to natural disasters or man-made events that affect a public water supply system.

Approximately 25-30 NERO staffers took part in the event, along with representatives from several municipalities and operators of public water supply system. The exercise focused on response time, outreach to the public, communication to the public regarding updates on events and how each municipality's emergency response plans are up-to-date in dealing with emergency scenarios.

The June 2015 explosion at a fertilizer plant in Hanover, PA was one example used in how to prepare for emergencies.

Source: DEP News, 3/31/2016

DEP Suspends Accreditation and Issues Notice of Violation to Vermont Laboratory

DEP suspended the accreditation of Analytical Services, Inc., an environmental laboratory located in Williston, Vermont, effective immediately. DEP accredited the laboratory in March 2015 to provide analysis of drinking water supplies for cryptosporidium, giardia, and E. coli. Over the past year, 15

Pennsylvania public water systems in Pennsylvania used Analytical Services to conduct raw source water sampling as part of a routine assessment for only those contaminants.

As a result of the suspension, Analytical Services will no longer be allowed to conduct tests to demonstrate compliance with water quality regulations for public drinking water suppliers in Pennsylvania.

Read [more](#).

Source: DEP News, 3/31/2016

Revenue Department Releases March 2016 Collections

Pennsylvania collected \$4.5 billion in General Fund revenue in March, which was \$86.7 million, or 2 percent, more than anticipated, Secretary of Revenue Eileen McNulty reported today. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total \$22.2 billion, which is \$147.4 million, or 0.7 percent, above estimate.

Sales tax receipts totaled \$745.3 million for March, \$24.6 million above estimate. Year-to-date sales tax collections total \$7.2 billion, which is \$27.8 million, or 0.4 percent, more than anticipated.

Personal income tax (PIT) revenue in March was \$1.1 billion, \$1.6 million below estimate. This brings year-to-date PIT collections to \$8.6 billion, which is \$21.5 million, or 0.2 percent, below estimate.

March **corporation tax revenue** of \$2.4 billion was \$29.2 million above estimate. Year-to-date corporation tax collections total \$4 billion, which is \$72.4 million, or 1.8 percent, above estimate.

Inheritance tax revenue for the month was \$97.5 million, \$11.6 million above estimate, bringing the year-to-date total to \$702.4 million, which is \$31.3 million, or 4.7 percent, above estimate.

Realty transfer tax revenue was \$31.4 million for March, \$3.3 million below estimate, bringing the fiscal-year total to \$356.5 million, which is \$5.4 million, or 1.5 percent, more than anticipated.

Other General Fund tax revenue, including cigarette, malt beverage, liquor and table games taxes, totaled \$52.6 million for the month, \$700,000 above estimate and bringing the year-to-date total to \$989 million, which is \$3.9 million, or 0.4 percent, below estimate.

Non-tax revenue totaled \$93.7 million for the month, \$25.5 million above estimate, bringing the year-to-date total to \$339.7 million, which is \$35.9 million, or 11.8 percent, above estimate.

In addition to the General Fund collections, the Motor License Fund received \$268.6 million for the month, \$22.6 million above estimate. Fiscal year-to-date collections for the fund – which include the commonly known gas and diesel taxes, as well as other license, fine and fee revenues – total \$1.9 billion, which is \$10.8 million, or 0.6 percent, below estimate.

Source: Department of Revenue Press Release, 4/1/2016

George Bedwick Elected Chairman, John Mizner Elected Vice Chairman

On March 31, 2016, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission elected Commissioner George Bedwick as its Chairman. Bedwick has served as the Commission's Vice Chairman since 2009. John Mizner was elected as Vice Chairman today to serve a two-year term together with Bedwick. Mizner has served as the Commission's Chairman since January 2014. After the election, IRRC's Commissioners commended Mizner on his service to the Commission as Chairman. "The position of Chairman is a significant responsibility and John has performed it in a highly professional fashion," stated Commissioner Murray Ufberg. "We are grateful for the leadership that John has provided," he continued.

Following the meeting, Bedwick stated, "It is an honor to be chosen to serve as the next Chair of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission. The Commission has the important mission of reviewing Pennsylvania's regulations and their potential impact on the citizens, families, and businesses of our state. I am committed to ensuring that we continue to carefully consider each regulatory proposal presented to us to make certain that it is in the public interest."

Bedwick has served as a Commissioner since January 2009 when he was appointed by House Speaker Keith R. McCall. Bedwick now serves on the Commission as the appointee of The Honorable Frank Dermody, Democratic Leader.

Bedwick retired from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 2007 after 30 years of service. During his tenure with the House of Representatives, Bedwick served as Legislative Director for the Majority Leader and Legislative Counsel to the Minority and Majority Whip. He is also a former board member of the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority. Bedwick is a graduate of King's College and Dickinson Law School.

Mizner has served as a Commissioner since 1995 when he was appointed by Governor Thomas J. Ridge. Mizner now serves on the Commission as the appointee of The Honorable Joseph B. Scarnati III, President Pro Tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate.

Mizner is an attorney with the Mizner Law Firm. He specializes in business litigation and administrative law.

Mizner is a graduate of St. Vincent College and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He lives with his family in Erie, Pennsylvania. The Independent Regulatory Review Commission provides oversight and review of all proposed and existing rules and regulations issued by all departments, boards, commissions, agencies or other authorities of the Commonwealth, excluding the Legislature, Fish and Boat Commission, the Game Commission, and any court, political subdivision, or municipal or local authority. IRRC also acts as a clearinghouse for complaints,

comments and other input regarding existing, proposed, and final-form regulations.

Source: IRRC Press Release, 3/31/2016

Pennsylvania 811 Celebrates Eighth Annual National Safe Digging Month

This April marks the ninth annual National Safe Digging Month, reminding Pennsylvania residents to always dial 8-1-1 three business days before any digging project. National Safe Digging Month is formally recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and has traditionally earned the support from nearly every state governor across the country.

When dialing 8-1-1, homeowners and contractors are connected to Pennsylvania 811, the local one call center, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of their intent to dig. Professional locators are then sent to the requested digging site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags, paint or both.

Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first dialing 8-1-1. Striking a single line can cause injury, incur repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck and planting a tree or garden are all examples of digging projects that should only begin a few days after a call to 811.

"As April marks the traditional start of digging season, we are using this month to strongly encourage individuals and companies to dial 8-1-1 before they begin digging," said Bill Kiger, President & CEO. "By dialing 8-1-1 three business days in advance to have the underground utility lines in their area marked, homeowners and professionals are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected."

The depth of utility lines can vary for a number of reasons, such as erosion, previous digging

projects and uneven surfaces. Utility lines need to be properly marked because even when digging only a few inches, the risk of striking an underground utility line still exists. Pennsylvania 811 encourages area residents to visit www.pa811.org or www.palcall.org for more information about digging safely.

Source: Pennsylvania 811, 3/31/2016

#####

This newsletter provides general information, not legal advice as to any specific matter. It should not be used as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.