

Pennsylvania Senate Transportation Committee Hearing Regarding “The Delay and Delivery of State Road and Bridge Projects”

**Remarks of Scott Waitlevertch, Manager of Government Affairs
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**Columbia Gas[®]
of Pennsylvania**

A NiSource Company



Factors Related To Natural Gas Utilities That Could Delay A PennDOT Project

- **Columbia Gas provides service in 26 counties encompassing seven PennDOT Districts (1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12) – Good communication and coordination is critical**
- **Lack of knowledge or timely notice of a PennDOT project that may need a natural gas pipeline replaced or moved can be a factor**
 - Natural gas utilities need advanced notice of a PennDOT project to determine if older pipeline infrastructure needs to be replaced
 - Gas utilities want to avoid having to cut into a newly paved PennDOT road to make a leak repair
 - If appropriate, Columbia Gas can plan to replace an older main line if we know about a PennDOT paving project in a timely manner
 - Time is needed to research; design and plan; prepare job orders; seek environmental, local and state permits; and construct the job
 - Requests from PennDOT to move or replace pipe necessitate Columbia Gas shifting capital dollars from other projects
 - Requests from PennDOT can significantly affect capital budgets and construction schedules

Factors Related To Natural Gas Utilities That Could Delay A PennDOT Project

- **Lack of knowledge or timely notice of a PennDOT project that may need a natural gas pipeline replaced or moved can be a factor**
 - Projects needing a pipeline relocated may have additional issues
 - If Columbia Gas is unable to relocate a pipeline in a PennDOT right of way, obtaining rights of way and easements on private property must be undertaken
 - This can be a time consuming process taking months to finalize
 - If a private property owner refuses to work with Columbia Gas, a condemnation/taking of the property must be implemented
 - This legal process can take additional months to finalize
 - Bridge replacement projects require Columbia Gas to bore beneath a stream or river to relocate a pipeline – stream and river boring efforts add additional time and can run into unexpected issues (rock, equipment failures, adjustments to proposed pipeline path)

Factors Related To Natural Gas Utilities That Could Delay A PennDOT Project

- **Unknown Construction Challenges**

- Newly discovered environmental issues once a project starts
 - Columbia Gas becomes responsible for environmental remediation
- Newly discovered underground or underwater objects
- PennDOT project plans/scope change creating new challenges
- Weather related issues

- **Utility contact information for PennDOT notifications may be dated**

- PennDOT project notifications and details may not reach the correct office or utility contacts if personnel changes occur within the utility or PennDOT

Possible Solutions To Avoid Delays In PennDOT Projects

- **Increased and advanced notices/coordination between PennDOT and utilities**
 - Columbia Gas is planning projects two to three years in the future
 - Can PennDOT provide us proposed projects that far in the future?
- **More frequent communication between PennDOT and utilities**
 - Should all PennDOT districts meet jointly with all utilities to discuss upcoming projects each quarter?
- **Exploration of more partnerships between PennDOT and utilities**
 - Are there ways for PennDOT and utilities to better coordinate projects to reduce costs for all?
- **Is PennDOT willing to obtain additional easements on projects to allow for utility installations around bridge structures and wingwalls or roads?**
- **Can PennDOT contractors be used for utility work to help expedite projects?**

Questions

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