

March 10, 2025

For Immediate Release

Raleigh, NC -- The National Utility Contractors Association of the Carolinas ([NUCA](#)) has issued the following statement in regards to Reps. Jeff Zenger (R-Forsyth), Sam Watford (R-Davidson), and Mitchell Setzer (R-Catawba) filing [HB 247 - 811 Amendments](#):

We would like to thank NC House Reps. Jeff Zenger, Sam Watford, and Mitchell Setzer for filing this very important bill. This legislation will have a positive impact on the utility contracting industry across North Carolina.

NUCA represents hard-working utility contractors across our state, generating tens of millions of dollars in economic impact each year. In addition, the work that we do is a critical component of expanding vital infrastructure for our citizens, including water, electricity, natural gas, and broadband. Our work also has a huge impact on our State's ability to be successful with economic development.

Unfortunately, many contractors are hamstrung by the inability of Facility Operators to timely locate underground facilities in accordance with the 811 "Dig Safely" program. This results in delayed construction projects, stifling progress and driving up costs due to slow turnaround times.

The higher costs of these delays are often passed to consumers, resulting in higher real estate costs for residential, commercial, and industrial properties. Delays of this nature are another factor as to why we are facing a housing shortage. At a time when we need to build more, we need to allow contractors at all stages to move faster and get the job done.

This legislation makes several changes to 811 laws in North Carolina, including:

- The life of a ticket extends from 15 days to 28 days. The excavator will maintain the marks during this time. A destroyed mark ticket can be called in should this be necessary due to weather or other work activities.
- The ticket will start on the date of commencement of work given by the excavator.
- The excavator should limit the locate request to areas of work that he anticipates completing in the next 28 days.
- The excavator can proceed with due care in the absence of a locate so long as the excavator gave proper notice to the Notification Center and the operator subsequently failed to respond or failed to properly locate facilities.
- The venue for adjudicating damage claims will be in the county of occurrence.
- A number of procedural changes to the Underground Damage Prevention Review Board.

"We would like to thank Reps. Jeff Zenger, Sam Watford, and Mitchell Setzer for taking the lead on this important initiative," said Mike Hewitt, President of NUCA of the Carolinas. "This legislation will save time and money for our hard-working contractors who are out in the field every day. It will also benefit our citizens by preventing undue cost burdens from being passed to them."

"With the State's extensive investments in broadband expansion, hurricane recovery, and general growth, we must work to streamline the utility contracting process as much as possible," Hewitt continued. "This bill will do just that while ensuring that we are still following best practices for

safety. We are thankful to Reps. Zenger, Watford, and Setzer for being champions of our industry and the people we serve."

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