



# STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN AND CENTRAL AGENCIES**

Mr. Ken Cheveldayoff, Chair  
Saskatoon Willowgrove

Mr. Doyle Vermette, Deputy Chair  
Cumberland

Mr. Steven Bonk  
Moosomin

Mr. Fred Bradshaw  
Carrot River Valley

Mr. Noor Burki  
Regina Coronation Park

Mr. Terry Jenson  
Martensville-Warman

Mr. Dana Skoropad  
Arm River



[The committee met at 19:00.]

**The Chair:** — Good evening and welcome, committee members, Mr. Minister, and your officials. We are at the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. The members of the committee are myself, Ken Cheveldayoff, as Chair; Steven Bonk; Fred Bradshaw; Noor Burki; Terry Jenson; Dana Skoropad; and Doyle Vermette. This evening we have two substitutions. Erika Ritchie will be subbing in for Doyle Vermette, and Matt Love will be subbing in for Noor Burki.

I have some documents to table. I'd like to table the following documents: CCA 39-29, Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan: Report of public losses, October 1 to December 31, 2023.

This evening our committee is also tabling lists from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of regulations and bylaws filed with the Legislative Assembly between January 1st, 2023 and December 31st, 2023 which have been committed to the committee for a review pursuant to rule 147(1). The Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel will assist the committee in its review by submitting a subsequent report at a later date identifying any regulations that are not in order with the provisions of rule 147(2). However the committee may also decide to review any of these regulations or bylaws for policy implications.

I'm also tabling three reports from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel that identify any issues pursuant to rule 147(2) that he found with regulations and bylaws filed in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and any steps that have been taken to rectify these issues. If the committee chooses, it may bring in the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel to review these reports at a subsequent meeting. These documents are: CCA 37-29, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: 2023 regulations filed; CCA 38-29, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: 2023 bylaws filed; CCA 40-29, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: 2017 report on regulations and bylaws; CCA 41-29, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: 2018 report on regulations and bylaws; CCA 42-29, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: 2019 report on regulations and bylaws.

Pursuant to 145(3), chapter 31 of the Provincial Auditor's 2023 report volume 2 was committed to the committee on December the 6th, 2023.

**Bill No. 142 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023***

**Clause 1**

**The Chair:** — All right, today we will be considering Bill No. 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*. Minister Duncan is here with his officials. I will remind officials to identify themselves before they speak and not to touch the microphones. The Hansard operator will turn them on for you.

We will begin our consideration with Clause 1, short title. Minister Duncan, please make your opening comments and introduce your officials.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good evening to committee members. I'm pleased to be here to discuss Bill 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act*. This evening joining me, to my left is Charlene Greve, the executive vice-president of stakeholder engagement, chief legal officer, and corporate secretary at SaskEnergy; as well as Terence Dahlem, to my right, is senior legal counsel at SaskEnergy; and David Keogan is my chief of staff.

Utility line locating is a critical safety measure to ensure that utility providers have marked their lines in advance of any ground disturbance work. The bill before us this evening will result in consequential amendments to the legislation for SaskPower, SaskTel, as well as SaskEnergy, and brings an important consistency across the Crown sector by setting a standardized line locate timing to three working days.

This bill ensures both safety and predictability by aligning the Crowns with current excavation industry practices as well as the line locate provisions currently utilized by Alberta's one-call service and by the Canada Energy Regulator. By harmonizing line locate times to three working days, this bill provides clarity, enhances safety, and codifies the existing line locate practices utilized by the utilities. In developing this legislation, SaskEnergy consulted with Crowns, other government ministries, and industry groups, with no negative responses received.

Mr. Chair and committee members, I believe that these amendments are a win-win for both the excavating industry and our Crown utilities. And with that, we would be pleased to take your questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any questions? Ms. Ritchie.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to start by saying that certainly it's good to see that safety and predictability are goals for these legislative amendments. Certainly safety is critical for our Crown employees and the work that they do alongside of our industry partners.

I won't have too many questions, but I do have a few I want to put to you, Mr. Minister, through the Chair. The first being, you mentioned that, you know, the affected Crowns were consulted along with those in industry, and I wonder if you could tell me specifically who from industry was consulted.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Ms. Ritchie, for the question. I will provide the list to the committee, to yourself, Ms. Ritchie. So the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance, the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], Crown Investments Corporation, the Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan, the Moose Jaw Construction Association, Prince Albert Construction Association, Saskatoon Construction Association, Regina Construction Association, occupational health and safety, the Regina & Region Home Builders' Association, SaskPower, the Saskatchewan Construction Association, the Saskatchewan Construction Safety

Association, the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, SaskTel, Saskatoon Home Builders' Association, and the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you for those responses, Mr. Minister. I guess, you mentioned also in your remarks that you did not receive any sort of negative responses. Perhaps you might provide us with a little bit, anecdotally, in terms of the kinds of feedback you did receive.

**Mr. Dahlem:** — Yes. Terence Dahlem with SaskEnergy, senior legal counsel. It was mostly positive especially by SaskTel and SaskPower because they recognize the consistency was the goal here. And for some of the other associations, they were interested in whether this is going to be a mandatory one-call, but because we did a consequential amendment and not a stand-alone Act, there is not an Act remaining for which we could use that.

So basically we heard about wish lists that probably will not happen today. But it was all positive or neutral, any response we received.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you again. Yeah. I do want to follow up on one thing that was mentioned there in terms of sort of a one-call provision. So are you saying that that is something that is not possible with these amendments? What, sort of, is the current state?

**Mr. Dahlem:** — So this has to do with . . . Saskatchewan 1st Call Corporation was a subsidiary of SaskEnergy and it no longer is, so we were not in a position to administer the Act, not having 1st Call as one of our subsidiaries anymore. So the consequential amendments into SaskTel, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy legislation was seen as the compromise there, seeing as how we do not have Sask 1st Call anymore. Otherwise we may administer and do a mandatory first call, but we're not in that position anymore.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — And just to make sure that I understand this correctly then, are you saying that when a client is looking to seek notification, that they have to make individual calls to each of these Crowns for locates within the stated time frame, or is there a one-call provision?

**Ms. Greve:** — Thank you. Thank you for the question. Sask 1st Call is the one-call sort of concierge, if you will, service for people, anyone looking to do ground disturbance work. And it's for safety reasons that they're able to make that one call. And Common Ground Alliance, being in the industry for ground disturbance and ground work and being a non-profit corporation, is managing one-call currently.

And so I think the thing here is what we're trying to do is . . . And we can achieve the same aims and goals with respect to the three Crowns who have the majority with massive sort of lines of pipe, telecommunications, and power infrastructure in the province. So you can imagine there are many, many calls.

And so by having a standardized time frame that's similar for all kinds of infrastructure and locating it, it helps with efficiency for people that are excavating and constructing and homeowners and fence builders and whatnot, just to make sure that they are able to plan ahead and get the service.

And one thing that I might just add in addition to the minister's comments is that it's a period of three working days, a standard time frame, or as otherwise agreed. You may have read that in the draft bill.

And the benefit of that, for the committee's information, is that it allows larger construction projects to plan ahead, to look forward in terms of the timing for their construction, to not have to keep calling in, keep getting locates, and keep locating, you know, massive tracts of railway line or whatever it is. They can plan and they can sort of schedule resources in terms of who gets sent out to do the locating depending on the location, right. And it's just a lot more efficient, a lot more simple for people making those requests to be able to plan ahead sometimes with the agreement portion or to know what time frame they need in terms of making sure that they've got their line locates for their work and safety is there.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you for that further clarification. Perhaps I could ask then in follow-up, it indicates "3 working days, or any longer period set out in an agreement between the person and the corporation . . ." and so it would be a minimum three working days. And then if you could describe for me what is contemplated to be part of that agreement. Is there going to be like a prescribed form? Or how that will work.

**Ms. Greve:** — I understand with respect to that, that with the ticket, with the request that's made — and I think Terence may have some other details — but when the request is made they can fill it on . . . People who take the calls at Sask 1st Call and Common Ground Alliance do gather that information. If there's a request to be other than three days, they make a special arrangement and it's documented. And of course that information gets back to the people doing the locating so that they're able to schedule appropriately.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — And so the organization you mentioned in terms of . . . that is handling the notifications that are coming in for line locates, now that is a third-party agency, is it? And just looking to find out a little bit more about how it's delegated, this responsibility, by the government.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Yes, that's correct. 1st Call Corporation, Sask 1st Call, is a subsidiary owned and operated by a non-profit, the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance inc.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — And then just further to that, so are they under contract and receiving monies to provide that service on behalf of the government or the Crown corps?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — It's self-funded through the tickets.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Okay. And when you say self-funded through the tickets, does that mean that the clients are paying a fee when they make the requests for line locates?

[19:15]

**Mr. Dahlem:** — That's correct. And it operates on a break-even basis, correct. And it's funded by the tickets and the members, yeah.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Okay. And then just maybe as my final question,

how will these changes be communicated to the industry?

**Ms. Greve:** — Thank you for that question. I think that the majority of the industry involved in underground excavation is a party to this, has been consulted, and will be happy to communicate this broadly. And I'm expecting there'll be some public announcements as well through our communications groups and our joint Crown groups as well.

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. Are there any other further questions from any other members? Seeing no more questions, we will proceed to the vote on the clauses. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*.

I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023* without amendment. Mr. Bonk moves. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Any closing comments by the minister?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Just really quickly, I want to thank the committee for their work this evening; Ms. Ritchie, for your questions; and the officials that are here this evening for being here and answering questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Opposition members, any concluding comments?

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Yes. I'll just concur with the minister, thanking him very much for the answers that he's provided along with his officials and them being here this evening. As well to legislative services and the committee members. Thank you all so much.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, officials, committee members. That concludes our business for today. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment. Mr. Bradshaw has moved. All agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. The committee stands adjourned to the call of the Chair. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 19:18.]