



Kent County Road Commission

**Steven A. Warren's Letter to the
Members of the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives
December 11, 2015**

On behalf of the Board of the Kent County Road Commission (KCRC), I urge you to reject House Bill 5016, which jeopardizes road projects by threatening to increase the price tag associated with making improvements.

Providing telecommunications companies with a one-year notice of a project that requires facility relocation is not realistic for most of the work that road commissions perform, including major improvement and widening projects and ongoing maintenance work like ditching and culvert repair.

While KCRC spends a great deal of time thoroughly evaluating our systems and developing five and ten-year plans for major improvement and widening projects, we cannot know if there are conflicts with communication and utility lines until final grading limits have been determined and preliminary plans completed. Design plans change frequently and unpredictable factors like public input, environmental evaluation, and historical review hinder our ability to provide accurate notice one year in advance of the project's start date.

Should House Bill 5016 be passed, KCRC will have to adopt more conservative standards for all of our projects. Under this approach, we will assume that each project within our five-year plan, which is updated annually, will require the relocation of all telecom facilities within the public's right-of-way for the entire length of the project. This could potentially cost telecoms more by requiring that they relocate their facilities unnecessarily.

With regard to our maintenance activities like ditching and culvert repair, this work is ongoing at ever-changing locations. It is unreasonable to expect KCRC, or any road agency, to forecast this work one year in advance.

KCRC also experiences major problems when communication lines' *actual* location does not align with what was originally permitted. Will we be accountable to telecoms for communication wires that are not set in the proper location or depth as per the permit we issued?

House Bill 5016 could cost the public – in Kent County, alone -- hundreds of thousands of dollars each year and benefit telecom companies who already occupy the public right of way free of charge. After a long and difficult debate over the future of funding transportation, I don't believe that this is how the public wants their transportation dollars spent – to assist for-profit companies in relocating their privately owned facilities at the expense of improving publicly owned roads.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Warren".

Steven A. Warren
Managing Director