



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

621 Woodland Square Loop SE • Lacey, Washington 98503

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September 3, 2020

Mark L. Johnson, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

RE: *Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission v. Steve Ruhnke Construction, Inc.*
Commission Staff's Response to Contest of Violations
Docket DG-200422

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On August 20, 2020, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) issued a \$5,000 penalty against Steve Ruhnke Construction, Inc. (Steve Ruhnke Construction or Company) for a violation of RCW 19.122.055, that occurred on October 31, 2019.

This violation was for damage to an underground natural gas facility on October 31, 2019, that occurred at 4804 240th Pl SE, Sammamish, Washington, because the Company failed to provide the required notice to facility operators through the one-call utility locator service as required before excavating and subsequently causing damage to an underground natural gas facility.

On August 27, 2020, the Company responded to the Commission's penalty assessment and contested the violation, stating that the Company has not performed work at the location.

Staff's investigation of this damage incident began following a damage report submitted by Puget Sound Energy (PSE), which identified Steve Ruhnke Construction as the excavator that caused the damage incident on October 31, 2019. The report noted that the excavator dug after its valid dig ticket expired and did not have a valid dig ticket when it caused the damage. Staff obtained additional information from PSE, including its gas first responders (GFR) report and a report made by a responder from the contract locator for PSE. Both reports indicate that Steve Ruhnke Construction was responsible for the damage incident, and the GFR report notes utility locate request 19480721 as the related dig ticket request. This dig ticket was requested on October 31, 2019, for 4804 240th Pl SE, Sammamish, approximately 45 minutes after the damage incident occurred.

Staff's investigation found five additional utility locate requests made by the company for excavation at this address requested between March 27, 2019, and August 27, 2019, which all expired prior to the damage incident: 19110541, 19203473, 19298170, 19318210, 19375304. The utility locate requests made by the

Company prior to and immediately following the damage incident demonstrate that the Company performed work at the location before and after the damage incident, and that the reports and documentation obtained from PSE demonstrate that Steve Ruhnke Construction caused the damage to the underground natural gas facility on October 31, 2019.

If you have any questions, please contact Steve Davidson, Compliance Investigator, Pipeline Safety and Damage Prevention, at (360) 664-1321, or by email at steve.davidson@utc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Sean C. Mayo, Director
Pipeline Safety