

ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUNE 2024

Director's Comments:



June 20th marked the "official" start of summer with the occurrence of the summer solstice. And with temperatures already hitting triple digits in many parts of our state, boy it sure does feel like summer. While I write this newsletter from the confines of my air conditioned office, I empathize with our many members that don't have such a luxury and must work outdoors.

OSHA has been taking significant steps to address heat-related hazards in workplaces. Working outdoors on utility construction projects during extreme heat requires heightened caution to prevent heat-related illnesses and ensure safety. As temperatures soar, the risk of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and dehydration increases significantly, making it imperative for workers and supervisors to adopt proactive measures.

Education and communication is key when working in extreme weather conditions. Supervisors should have a clear emergency plan in place and ensure that all workers are aware of it. In case of any signs of heat stress, immediate medical attention should be sought.

In closing, I wanted to recognize a couple of accomplishments from within the ranks of AUCA. First, Dru Bramblett, daughter of AUCA Board Member Andru Bramblett will be competing this month for the title of Miss Alabama. Dru has performed the National Anthem the past two years at the AUCA Fall General Meeting and is an incredibly talented young lady. We wish her the best of luck.

Lastly, David Pearson will be retiring from Warrior Tractor & Equipment after a stellar career of 49 years and 9 months in the John Deere equipment business. David has been an ardent supporter of AUCA, and we certainly hope that he enjoys his well earned retirement.

I hope you all stay safe and cool and enjoy your summer!

Tim

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Upcoming Meetings & Events:

AUCA Industry Lunch Meetings
Dates and Locations To Be Announced

AUCA Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, September 5, 2024



The Lodge at Gulf State Park - Gulf Shores, AL
Tuesday, September 17 - Thursday, September 19, 2024



AUCA 2024 Fall General Meeting
& Sporting Clay Shoot
Thursday, October 10, 2024
Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club
Montgomery, AL



AUCA 2025 Spring General Meeting,
Golf Tournament and Shrimp & Crawfish Boil
Thursday, April 24, 2025
Arrowhead Country Club
Montgomery, AL



News & Notes:

Notice of ADEM Director Job Performance Evaluation:

The Alabama Environmental Management Commission (Commission) is providing the opportunity for interested persons to submit written comments on Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Director Lance LeFleur's job performance as part of the Commission's upcoming ADEM Director Job Performance Evaluation.

Written comments from interested persons regarding Director LeFleur's job performance should be directed to: A. Frank McFadden , Chair, Alabama Environmental Management Commission, P.O. Box 301463, Montgomery, AL 36130-1463 (street address: 1400 Coliseum Boulevard, Montgomery, AL 36110-2400) or by e-mail at aemc@adem.alabama.gov. Written comments should include "ADEM Director Job Performance Evaluation" as the subject of the written submissions.

Written comments for the current ADEM Director Job Performance Evaluation should cover the period from October 14, 2023, to July 31, 2024, the deadline for receipt of comments for the upcoming evaluation.

Written comments must be received in the Commission Office prior to 5:00 p.m. on July 31, 2024.

This notice is hereby given this 18th day of June, 2024, by authority of the Chair of the Commission.

Weaver Environmental Services Company Event - June 21



AUCA Board of Directors Member Shaun Gonzales from Weaver Environmental Services Company (WESCO) in Huntsville hosted a great event for nearly 250 friends and business associates at Old South Clays. U.S. Congressman Dale Strong (*pictured above*) served as the special guest speaker.



News & Notes:

AUCA 2025 Board of Directors Nominations:

AUCA will be soliciting the membership for candidates to serve on the 2025 AUCA Board of Directors. If you have someone in mind that you think would be an asset on the AUCA Board, please email us by August 31st to recommend them to the AUCA Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving yourself, please feel free to list your name as well.

Nomination Forms will be sent out electronically to all member companies. The Nominating Committee will review the nomination forms of those desiring to serve on the 2025 Board at the September 5th AUCA Board Meeting. The proposed slate of nominees will be announced to the membership and the candidates will be voted on by the members in attendance at the October 10th Fall General Meeting in Montgomery.

Governor Ivey Awards \$53.5 Million for 'Middle-Mile' Broadband Service

Governor Kay Ivey announced she has awarded nearly \$53.5 million to continue the expansion of high-speed internet service in Alabama.

The grant awarded to the Alabama Fiber Network, a coalition of electric and generation/transmission cooperatives, will help develop the second phase of the state's "middle-mile" broadband network deployment. The project will impact 24 Alabama counties including Baldwin, Coffee, Colbert, Covington, Dale, Dallas, DeKalb, Elmore, Etowah, Franklin, Hale, Jefferson, Lee, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Mobile, Montgomery, Perry, Russell, Tuscaloosa and Walker counties.

Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA)

The Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) was established for the purpose of enforcing the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law, for reviewing penalty provisions, and for reviewing the adequacy of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Program.

The Enforcement Program is a complaint-driven process where a complaint may be submitted against an entity for violation of the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law. A complaint may be submitted as information only and not designated for enforcement penalties.



A complaint may be submitted using the Complaint Form [at this Website](#) no later than 30 days after the occurrence of an alleged violation. The submitted Complaint Form is reviewed by the ALUDPA for determination of an alleged violation and for penalty provisions that may apply. The reported violator is then notified by the ALUDPA that a response may be submitted using the Response Form at this Website no later than 14 days after the ALUDPA notification.



News & Notes:



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2024

CONTACT: M. Lynn Battle, Chief
Office of External Affairs
mlb@adem.alabama.gov
(334) 271-7955

Funding for Drinking Water, Sewer Projects Surpasses \$1 billion

ADEM continues to award grants, loans, loan forgiveness based on need

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Two years after the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) began the process of awarding COVID-19 relief era funding to address critical drinking water and sewer needs, more than \$1.1 billion has been committed to water and sewer systems throughout the state.

Most of the funding came from the state’s share of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. In 2022, during a special session called by Gov. Kay Ivey, lawmakers approved \$225 million from ARPA for drinking water and sewer projects. In 2023, during another special session called by the governor, the Legislature approved an additional \$400 million.

ADEM supplemented that over the past two years with \$251 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) passed by Congress in 2021 and more than \$279 million in State Revolving Fund (SRF) money for drinking water and sewer systems. That brought ADEM’s total investment in drinking water and sewer projects in 2022 and 2023 to more than \$1.15 billion.

“The size of the investment the state is placing in these essential services is unprecedented in Alabama history,” ADEM Director Lance LeFleur said. “The projects we are funding will have a tremendous impact on the health and quality of life for literally millions of Alabamians. Those impacts will be long-lasting, benefiting generations of residents, particularly those in disadvantaged and underresourced communities.”

The approach ADEM took from the start in awarding funding – in the forms of grants, low-interest loans and loan forgiveness – is based on need, where those systems and communities with the greatest needs are priorities.

In 2022 alone, ADEM awarded \$463 million to 181 systems – 105 drinking water systems and 76 clean water (sewer) systems. Of that total, the majority of the funding went to disadvantaged communities, including \$157 million for 53 projects in Alabama’s Black Belt region. Those communities have long been hampered by failing or inadequate drinking water or sewer services. Working with partners, ADEM funded demonstration projects in Lowndes and Hale counties to address sewer problems associated



News & Notes:

(Continued from page 5)

with dense soil that renders regular septic systems ineffective and sparse populations that make conventional public sewer system connections impractical.

“In our first year, we were able to make funding available to communities in 63 of Alabama’s 67 counties,” LeFleur said. “In 2023, ADEM awarded an additional \$682 million, making sure to fund projects in the four counties that did not receive funding the previous year. Every county in the state will see the benefit of this initiative.”

To date, ADEM has approved funding for more than 500 projects.

LeFleur pointed out that despite the unprecedented investment in drinking water and sewer infrastructure, there still are tremendous needs that far exceed available funding. ADEM has received applications for 757 projects from 535 of the state’s 1,061 drinking water and sewer systems requesting more than \$3.4 billion in funding.

“We will continue to evaluate projects based on need,” LeFleur said, noting that a focus must remain on assisting disadvantaged and marginalized areas. “The goal is the same – improving the health and safety of residents by helping bring safe, reliable drinking water and sanitary wastewater services to those in need.”

ADEM will also continue to partner with various state, federal and local agencies as well as community groups to identify and fund needs, as well as assist drinking water and sewer systems in applying and qualifying for funding.

“We are taking a long view of this,” LeFleur said. “Even after all the ARPA and BIL money is gone, we will continue to provide funding to drinking water and sewer projects through our State Revolving Fund and looking for creative ways to meet needs. We are 100 percent committed to improving the lives of people now and in the future.”

For more information about water and sewer grant applications and awards, go to ADEM’s website, www.adem.alabama.gov, and click on the “ARPA/SRF Updates” button.

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ACRI Job Board Employers



1. What is the new Job Board offering on the Go Build Alabama website?

- ▶ The Go Build Alabama Job Board gives career seekers a central location to easily search for job opportunities from Alabama-licensed commercial and industrial construction employers. From skilled craft/field positions to administrative to sales, this job board offers a streamlined user experience for both the applicant and employer. Career seekers only upload their profile once to have their information dynamically populate the jobs they apply to, speeding up the tedious process of job-hunting online. Employers get a comprehensive view of interested and targeted applicants, can rate applicants on a star system for a convenient overview of qualifications, and even add recruitment notes. Email reminders and notifications are also incorporated, keeping you in the loop even when you aren't logged in.

2. How do I create an account and post my open positions?

- ▶ To take advantage of this free resource, visit jobs.gobuildalabama.com and click the "Employers" button in the website's header. Once you've clicked the "Employers" button, you will be taken to a registration page to share basic information about yourself and your company. Once you sign up and confirm your email address, you can update your company page with additional information, including social media links, company overview, logo, etc., while your company is pending approval. Once your company has been approved by the team at ACRI, you can start posting jobs and hiring qualified leads!

3. How can I best use the Go Build Alabama Job Board for my company?

- ▶ This job board was developed with companies, recruiters and career seekers in mind! Our goal is to make it as easy as possible to post your open positions and rank qualified leads. We recommend having at least three open jobs on the job board and being as descriptive as possible as you explain job requirements, education and qualifications. You can add details about your job opening such as type of job (travel, on-site, hybrid, etc.), location of position (city, state, permanent, seasonal, apprenticeship, training, etc.), and even pay expectations (hourly, salary, competitive, range). Giving an applicant as much information as possible increases your chance of gathering interested, qualified leads that will last. We also hope you find value in the built-in internal review process by adding relevant notes and rating applicants. While this is not built to replace your current hiring or HR processes, we do hope this acts as a support tool for your team.

4. I've signed up as a company through the employer form, when can I expect to be approved?

- ▶ We are so excited you've decided to join! Our ACRI team is small but mighty, and you should expect to receive a notification about your company approval in three to five business days.

- ▶ Visit jobs.gobuildalabama.com to take advantage of this free resource.

Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

From Ryan Sharpe - Chairman CWCC & Sante Esposito - Key Advocates

June 3, 2024

FY25 Appropriations Schedule

The FY25 House Appropriations bills that allocate funding for State Revolving Funds (SRFs) and Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Grants are scheduled for Committee action in late June and early July with the goal of securing full House approval before Congress recesses in August.

House Republicans are proposing a 6% reduction in non-defense discretionary spending while the Democrat-controlled Senate is calling for additional spending to address inflation.

Since it is doubtful an agreement between the two houses will be reached, it is likely that a Concurrent Resolution will be required in order to continue funding government operations.

FY25 Budget and CWCC Funding Requests

President Biden's Proposed FY25 Budget includes \$1.24 billion for the Clean Water SRFs, \$1.12 billion for the Safe Drinking Water SRFs, \$4 million for WIIN Grants and no SRF earmark funding.

The Clean Water Construction Coalition (CWCC) supports Clean Water SRF funding at a minimum of \$4.49 billion, \$4.37 billion for Safe Drinking Water SRFs and \$20 million for WIIN Grants.

The CWCC opposes earmarks as takedowns from budget allocations and, if earmarks are utilized, supports the smaller earmark levels.

House Republican FY25 Budget Proposal

The House FY25 Budget Resolution calls for limiting overall spending increases and slashing discretionary spending by \$2.5 trillion over a decade. Passage of this measure in the Senate is uncertain.

FY24 Appropriations Recap

The final FY24 Appropriations Act provides \$851 million for Clean Water SRFs, \$494 million for Safe Drinking Water SRFs and \$20 million for WIIN Grants.

It also included \$787 million in Clean Water SRF earmarks which is a takedown from the base allocation of \$1.63 billion. Safe Drinking Water SRF earmarks of \$631 represent a takedown from the base allocation of \$1.12 billion.

The CWCC is engaging with policy makers and industry partners on future SRF appropriations.



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

(Continued from page 8)

Other Legislative Issues

The CWCC continues to support the "STREAM Act" which would provide \$300 million for water recycling, \$750 million for surface and groundwater storage and conveyance projects, \$150 million for desalination projects, \$100 million for projects to provide drinking water for disadvantaged communities, and \$250 million for environmental restoration projects. While the Coalition is advocating for legislative action on this bill, its future is uncertain.

The Coalition supports Congressman Garamendi's amendment that would allow the EPA to issue National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for certain public works projects for 10 years instead of five years.

Legislation increasing the federal share for Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding in areas experiencing extreme drought and disadvantaged communities was introduced in April.

The Coalition is continuing to pursue additional funding for the Alternative Water Source Program and mega recycled water projects.

KeyAdvocates



cleanwaterconstructioncoalition.org

Health & Safety:

June is Trench Safety Month:

June 2024 has been declared "Trench Safety Month" by the National Utility Contractors Association. This declaration of safety further highlights the association's innovative educational and safety program, the "Trench Safety Stand Down" week, was held June 17-21, 2024.

TRENCHING SAFETY

5 Things You Should Know to Stay Safe



- 1** Ensure there's a safe way to enter and exit.
See 1926.651(c)
- 2** Trenches must have cave-in protection.
See 1926.652(a)
- 3** Keep materials away from the edge of the trench.
See 1926.651(j)
- 4** Look for standing water or other hazards.
See 1926.651(l)
- 5** Never enter a trench unless it has been properly inspected.
See 1926.651(k)

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration
WWW.OSHA.GOV/TRENCHING • 800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 877-889-5627

OSHA 3974-06-2019



PROTECT WORKERS IN TRENCHES

Prevent trench collapses and save lives:

SLOPE or bench trench walls,

SHORE trench walls with supports, or

SHIELD trench walls with trench boxes



U.S. Department of Labor

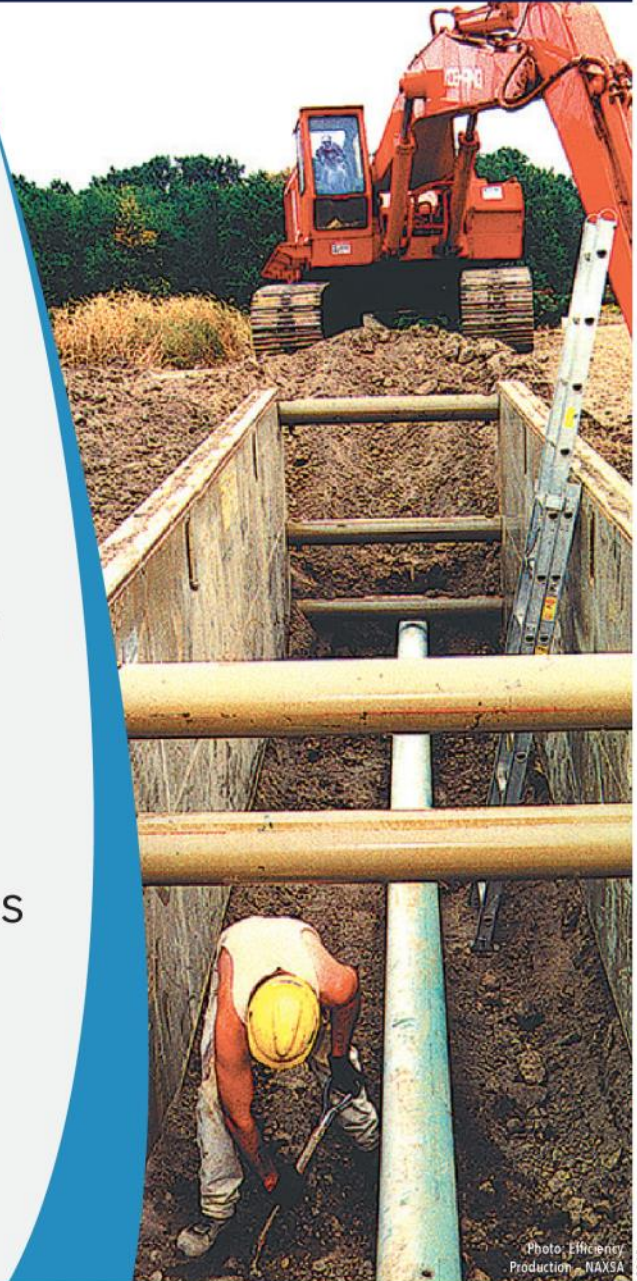


Photo: Efficiency
Production - NAXSA

OSHA 3215-06R 2018

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OSHA ALERT

Prevent Heat Illness at Work

Outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous.

Nearly **3 out of 4** heat illness fatalities happen during the **first week of work**. New and returning workers need to build tolerance to heat by taking frequent breaks and working shorter shifts in the heat to start.

Dangerous heat exposure can occur indoors or outdoors, in any season. Employers can keep workers safe by following these simple safety practices:

- **Follow the 20% Rule** — on the 1st day, don't allow employees to work more than 20% of a shift at full intensity in the heat. Increase their time by no more than 20% a day until they are used to working in the heat.
- **Provide cool drinking water** – encourage workers to drink at least one cup every 20 minutes, even if they are not thirsty.
- **Rest breaks** — allow workers time to recover from heat in a shady or cool location.
- **Dress for the heat** — have workers wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing if possible.
- **Watch out for each other** — encourage workers to monitor themselves and others for signs of heat illness.
- **Look for any signs of heat illness**, including fainting, dizziness, nausea, and muscle spasms, and act quickly — when in doubt, **call 911**.
- **Offer training** on the hazards of heat exposure and how to prevent illness.
- **Develop an Emergency Action Plan** on what to do if a worker shows signs of heat-related illness.



To learn more about heat illness prevention and first aid, visit www.osha.gov/heat.

OSHA alerts are issued on occasion to draw attention to worker safety and health issues and solutions.

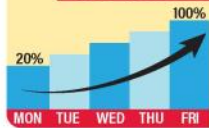


Prevent Heat Illness at Work

Outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous.

Ways to Protect Yourself and Others

Ease into Work. Nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities from heat illness happen during the first week of work.



- ✓ **New and returning** workers need to build tolerance to heat (acclimatize) and take frequent breaks.
- ✓ **Follow the 20% Rule.** On the first day, work no more than 20% of the shift's duration at full intensity in the heat. Increase the duration of time at full intensity by no more than 20% a day until workers are used to working in the heat.



Drink Cool Water

Drink cool water even if you are not thirsty – at least 1 cup every 20 minutes.



Dress for the Heat

Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, and breathable clothing if possible.



Take Rest Breaks

Take enough time to recover from heat given the temperature, humidity, and conditions.



Watch Out for Each Other

Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illness.



Find Shade or a Cool Area

Take breaks in a designated shady or cool location.



If Wearing a Face Covering

Change your face covering if it gets wet or soiled. Verbally check on others frequently.

First Aid for Heat Illness

The following are signs of a medical emergency!



- Abnormal thinking or behavior
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

- 1** >> **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY**
- 2** >> **COOL THE WORKER RIGHT AWAY WITH WATER OR ICE**
- 3** >> **STAY WITH THE WORKER UNTIL HELP ARRIVES**



Watch for any other signs of heat illness and act quickly. When in doubt, call 911.

If a worker experiences:

- Headache or nausea
- Weakness or dizziness
- Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- Elevated body temperature
- Thirst
- Decreased urine output



Take these actions:

- >> Give water to drink
- >> Remove unnecessary clothing
- >> Move to a cooler area
- >> Cool with water, ice, or a fan
- >> Do not leave alone
- >> Seek medical care if needed



For more information: 1-800-321-OSHA (6742)
TTY 1-877-889-5627 www.osha.gov/heat

Federal law entitles you to a safe workplace. You have the right to speak up about hazards without fear of retaliation. See www.osha.gov/workers for information about how to file a confidential complaint with OSHA and ask for an inspection.



United States
Consumer Product Safety Commission

Fireworks Injuries & Deaths

2023 REPORT

#CelebrateSafely

Safety Tips

- ★ Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers.
- ★ Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- ★ Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- ★ Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- ★ Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully.
- ★ Never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- ★ More Fireworks Safety Tips: [cpsc.gov/fireworks](https://www.cpsc.gov/fireworks)

Injuries & Deaths



9,700

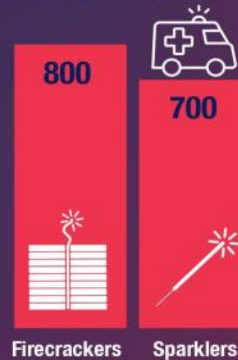
people were
treated in ERs
for fireworks injuries in 2023

8 Deaths
from Fireworks in 2023



How & When Injuries Occurred

2023 Injuries
by Firework Type



66%

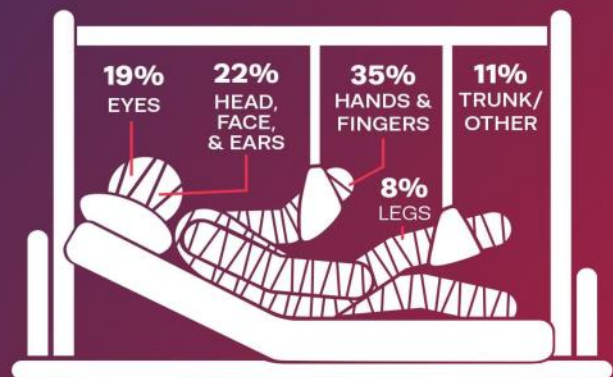
of injuries occurred
in the weeks before &
after the July 4th holiday



Most Injured Body Parts



42% of the injuries were
burns



Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety
Commission 2023 Fireworks Annual Report



CPSC.gov
USCPC

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***AUCA IS A MEMBER-DRIVEN, NEEDS
FOCUSED TRADE ASSOCIATION CREATED
SOLELY TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE
UTILITY INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF
ALABAMA.***

**We're on the Web!
www.aluca.org**

Please print out this newsletter to share with others in your company. And, if you are receiving this for the company owner, please print out a copy for him/her.

**Let AUCA Be Your Source For All Your
Training Needs**

Contact the Association Office for more information

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