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STRENGTHENING AMERICAN ENERGY: A REVIEW OF PIPELINE SAFETY POLICY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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STRENGTHENING AMERICAN ENERGY: A REVIEW OF PIPELINE SAFETY POLICY

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:31 a.m. in room 2322, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Robert E. Latta (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Latta, Weber, Palmer, Allen, Balderson, Pfluger, Harshbarger, Miller-Meeks, Fry, Lee, Rulli, Evans, Goldman, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex officio), Castor (subcommittee ranking member), Peters, Menendez, Mullin, McClellan, DeGette, Matsui, Tonko, Veasey, Schrier, Fletcher, Ocasio-Cortez, Auchincloss, and Pallone (ex officio).

Staff present: Ansley Boylan, Director of Operations; Clara Cargile, Professional Staff Member; Andrew Furman, Professional Staff Member; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Calvin Huggins, Clerk, Energy; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Sophie Khanahmadi, Deputy Staff Director; Mary Martin, Chief Counsel; Ben Mullaney, Press Secretary; Chris Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Peter Spencer, Senior Professional Staff Member, Energy; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Jane Vickers, Press Assistant; Perry Hamilton, Minority Member Services and Outreach Manager; La'Zale Johnson, Minority Intern; Kristopher Pittard, Minority Professional Staff Member; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; Kylea Rogers, Minority Policy Analyst; Andrew Souvall, Minority Director of Communications, Outreach, and Member Services; and Tuley Wright, Minority Staff Director, Energy.

Mr. LATTA. The Chair calls the Subcommittee on Energy to order, and the Chair recognizes himself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT E. LATTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

And welcome to today's hearing, "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy." And I want to thank our witnesses for participating today.

We will examine the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's—PHMSA—pipeline safety program. PHMSA is a Department of Transportation agency tasked with developing and enforcing Federal safety regulations for the Nation's onshore pipe-

line infrastructure and the transportation of hazardous materials. The witnesses before us represent different segments of PHMSA's regulated community and can provide important perspectives on the reauthorization of PHMSA.

Pipelines are the safest and most efficient mode of transportation for oil, natural gas, liquid energy products, and hazardous materials, and they play an instrumental role in delivering the products that drive our Nation's economy forward. The agency has about 3.3 million miles of pipelines under its purview. In order to ensure these pipelines are operated in a safe and reliable manner, PHMSA partners and coordinates with States to administer pipeline safety programs and inspect infrastructure within a State's boundaries.

PHMSA was last authorized in Protecting Our Infrastructure, Pipelines, and Enhancing Safety Act, the PIPES Act of 2020, through fiscal year 2023. It is my belief that we can work in a bipartisan fashion in this Congress with our House and Senate colleagues to reauthorize PHMSA to continue carrying out its mission and associated duties. This subcommittee has a responsibility to ensure PHMSA maintains a strong focus on safety and operates within its statutory authorities.

The PIPES Act of 2020 included several statutorily mandated rulemakings that never fully got out of the gate under the previous administration. Today the subcommittee will examine implementation of the PIPES Act to ensure that PHMSA is on track to carry out congressional intent in a cost effective and workable manner.

Additionally, the subcommittee will examine new challenges and opportunities for pipeline safety. For example, the replacement of aging infrastructure must be a top priority for PHMSA, States, and pipeline operators, but it presents costs and operational challenges. Especially as energy demand is projected to increase significantly in the immediate future, the upgrading of our natural gas network must be prioritized to ensure the safe transportation of natural gas and other important energy sources and products.

While substantial progress has been made in replacing aging pipes, there's still work to be done. I look forward to the—hearing from our witnesses on how PHMSA can help address the remaining 1 percent of the iron distribution pipes.

American innovations and net—new technologies like artificial intelligence technology also present opportunities to bolster the quality of risk assessments and advance safety towards our collective goal of zero incidents. However, these technologies will also pose challenges to information and operational security. It is important that PHMSA reauthorization gives the agencies the tools needed to have an effective approach for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

In his confirmation hearing last week, Paul Roberti, President Trump's nominee for PHMSA Administrator, committed to pursuing opportunities to utilize new, cost-effective technology to enhance safety. The subcommittee hopes to collaborate with PHMSA and pipeline operators in this endeavor.

As we look at the reauthorization that must prioritize the improvements of the agency's core responsibility, which is safety. I am concerned that the previous administration advanced extraneous priorities and set safety onto the side. However, President Trump's

administration has recommitted to this critical mission, and I believe this committee can produce a reauthorization that maintains safety as a cornerstone of pipeline safety—of the pipeline safety program.

Pipelines are imperative to public safety and the energy security of our Nation. I look forward to hearing from the pipeline operators today as we build on American energy leadership.

And I want to thank again our witnesses for being here today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Latta follows:]

Chairman Robert Latta
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy
"Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy."
July 22, 2025

As prepared for delivery

Welcome to today's hearing, "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy." And thank you to our witness for your participation.

Today, we will examine the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) pipeline safety program.

PHMSA is a Department of Transportation agency tasked with developing and enforcing federal safety regulations for the nation's onshore pipeline infrastructure and the transportation of hazardous materials.

The witnesses before us represent different segments of PHMSA's regulated community and can provide important perspectives on the reauthorization of PHMSA.

Pipelines are the safest and most efficient mode of transportation for oil, natural gas, liquid energy products, and hazardous materials, and they play an instrumental role in delivering the products that drive our nation's economy forward.

The agency has about 3.3 million miles of pipelines under its purview. In order to ensure these pipelines are operated in a safe and reliable manner, PHMSA partners and coordinates with States to administer pipeline safety programs and inspect infrastructure within a state's boundaries.

PHMSA was last authorized in the Protecting Our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act (PIPES) of 2020, through Fiscal Year 2023.

I hope we can work in a bipartisan fashion this Congress with our House and Senate colleagues to reauthorize PHMSA to continue carrying out its mission and associated duties. This subcommittee has a responsibility to ensure PHMSA maintains a strong focus on safety and operates within its statutory authorities.

The PIPES Act of 2020 included several statutorily mandated rulemakings that never fully got out the door under the previous administration. Today, the subcommittee will examine implementation of the PIPES Act to ensure PHMSA is on track to carry out Congressional intent in a cost-effective and workable manner.

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For example, the replacement of aging infrastructure must be a top priority for PHMSA, States, and pipeline operators, but it presents cost and operational challenges.

Especially as energy demand is projected to increase significantly in the immediate future, the upgrading of our natural gas network must be prioritized to ensure the safe transportation of natural gas and other important energy sources and products.

While substantial progress has been made in replacing aging pipes, there is still work to be done. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how PHMSA can best address the remaining 1 percent of iron distribution pipes.

American innovations and new technologies, like artificial intelligence technology, also present opportunities to bolster the quality of risk assessments and advance safety towards our collective goal of zero incidents. However, these technologies will also pose challenges to information and operational security. It is important that a PHMSA reauthorization gives the agency the tools needed to have an effective approach for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

In his confirmation hearing last week, Paul Roberti, President Trump's nominee for PHMSA administrator, committed to pursuing opportunities to utilize new, cost-effective technologies to enhance safety. The subcommittee hopes to collaborate with PHMSA and pipeline operators in this endeavor.

A PHMSA reauthorization must prioritize the improvement of the agency's core responsibility: safety. I am concerned that the previous administration advanced extraneous priorities and set safety to the side. However, President Trump's administration has recommitted to this critical mission, and I hope this Committee can produce a reauthorization that maintains safety as the cornerstone of PHMSA's pipeline safety program.

Pipelines are imperative to public safety and the energy security of our nation. I look forward to hearing from pipeline operators today as we build on American energy leadership.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. And I yield back and at this time recognize the gentlelady who—the—from the 14th District of Florida, who is the vice—or, I am sorry, the ranking member of the subcommittee, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KATHY CASTOR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Ms. CASTOR. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning, everyone.

Today's hearing is an important reminder of the role of this committee, of ensuring the safety of the public and our energy infrastructure.

Congress created the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration in 2004, and we charged it with ensuring the safety of nearly 3.3 million miles of pipelines across the country.

Now, pipelines can be dangerous. There are many hundreds of pipeline safety incidents every year, many that result in death and injury. That is why PHMSA's work in setting safety standards and inspecting interstate pipelines is critical. For years, Democrats have been focused on ensuring that PHMSA has adequate resources and a strong professional workforce.

After a number of deadly accidents and the growing magnitude of aged, leaky, and unsafe pipelines, Congress passed the PIPES Act of 2020 to improve the safety of gas gathering lines and pipelines while also addressing wasteful and dangerous methane gas leakages. Congress followed on in 2021 in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and allocated $1 billion over 5 years for natural gas distribution, infrastructure safety, and modernization grants to help replace leak-prone pipelines.

I noticed in your opening, Mr. Chairman, you said the Trump administration is very committed to safety. Oh, no. To the contrary, the Trump administration has halted those safety and modernization grants earlier this year. But multiple lawsuits were filed by States, nonprofits, and local communities challenging the freeze. And on April 17 a Federal judge ordered the Trump administration to reinstate funding, ruling that the freeze was arbitrary and capricious, and violated the law. The Department of Energy and EPA were required to resume disbursement of already awarded safety grant funds.

The Trump administration also is failing to follow through on other pipeline safety initiatives, even though the Congress has been clear that we expect PHMSA to conduct robust reviews of pipeline maintenance and operation plans. When Congress reauthorized PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety in the bipartisan PIPES Act, we required PHMSA to consider protection of the environment when reviewing proposed safety rules, including methane pollution leak detection. The former administration completed a final leak detection rule, but President Trump arbitrarily demanded that PHMSA withdraw it.

That is not smart. Climate risk, cost, and harms are growing in severity, and PHMSA's work is only becoming more important. Climate-fueled extreme weather events can cause pipeline leaks and explosions, especially in high-risk States like Texas and Louisiana.

We must ensure that all impacts are considered in siting, design, repair, and maintenance of oil and gas infrastructure, including pipelines. Unfortunately, rather than follow the law mandated by Congress, the Trump administration's PHMSA is taking a laissez faire approach to pipeline safety, and this is dangerous and costly.

To add insult to injury, the Trump administration has gutted PHMSA over the past 7 months. Enforcement actions by the agency are at record lows, just 5 cases in the first 3 months of this year, compared to 66 cases during the same time period in 2017. And get this: More than half of the agency's senior leadership has left.

We are seeing this kind of sabotage over and over again from the Trump administration, and it is really putting Americans at risk. For example, my neighbors back home in Florida are less safe this hurricane season because of cuts at the National Weather Service. They have ended vital satellite forecasting initiatives and have left offices understaffed.

At FERC, the President has asked the existing Chair, who he appointed the first time around, to resign early and then nominated a new chair who doesn't have any energy background. These actions jeopardize FERC independence and make our energy systems less safe.

At the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, President Trump has fired a safety commissioner and pushed Executive orders that threaten NRC independence. And just last week, Trump fired nearly every member of the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board. So at every opportunity that—Trump is cutting corners with safety, and undermining energy independent—agency independence.

And folks, this is not normal, and I urge my Republican colleagues on this committee to stand up to this reckless gutting of independent agency experts and abdication of the laws that keep us safe. Americans want safe and affordable energy, but we know we are going to be grappling with the higher costs of the Big, Ugly Bill. I hope we can talk a little bit about that today.

Mr. Chairman, hope springs eternal. Nevertheless, this could be the start of a good bipartisan dialog to reauthorize pipeline safety and address some of the issues in this committee.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Castor follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Energy
Ranking Member Kathy Castor

Hearing on "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"

July 22, 2025

Today's hearing is a reminder about the important role that this Committee has in ensuring the safety of the public and our energy infrastructure. Congress created the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration in 2004 and charged it with ensuring the safety of nearly 3.3 million miles of pipelines across the country.

Pipelines can be dangerous – there are over 630 pipeline safety incidents each year, resulting in 44 injuries and 10 deaths. That's why PHMSA's work – setting safety standards and inspecting interstate pipelines – is critical.

For years, Democrats have been focused on ensuring that PHMSA has adequate resources and the professional workforce that it needs. After a number of accidents and evidence of harmful, leaky pipelines, Congress passed the Pipes Act of 2020 to address methane pollution and improve safety standards for gas gathering lines and other pipeline segments. We followed in 2021 with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that allocated $1 billion over five years for Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grants to help replace leak-prone pipelines.

Congress has been clear that we expect PHMSA to conduct robust reviews of pipeline maintenance and operation plans. The last time we reauthorized PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety, in the bipartisan PIPES Act of 2020, we required PHMSA to consider "protection of the environment" when reviewing proposed safety rules, including on methane leak detection. The Biden Administration completed a final leak detection rule, but President Trump demanded PHMSA withdraw it.

Climte risks, costs, and harms are growing in severity, and PHMSA's work is only becoming more important. Climate-fueled hurricanes and other extreme weather can cause pipeline leaks and explosions, especially in high-risk states like Texas and Louisiana. We must ensure that climate impacts are considered in siting, design, repair, and maintenance of oil and gas infrastructure, including pipelines. I hope today can be the start of a real bipartisan process to reauthorize PHMSA's pipeline safety activities and that we can work to address some of these issues in this Committee.

Unfortunately, rather than follow the law mandated by Congress, the Trump Administration's PHMSA is taking a laissez fare approach to pipeline safety, and that is dangerous and costly. The Trump Administration has gutted PHMSA over the past seven months. Enforcement actions by the agency are at record lows – just 5 cases in the first three months of this year, compared to 66 cases during the same time period in 2017. More than half of the agency's senior leadership has left.

We've seen this playbook over and over again from the Trump Administration. My neighbors in Florida are less safe as we enter hurricane season because cuts at the National Weather Service have terminated vital satellite forecasting programs and left Florida offices 20-40% understaffed. At the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the President asked the existing Chair—who he appointed the first time around—to resign early and then nominated a new Chair who doesn't have an energy background. These actions jeopardize FERC's independence and make our energy systems less safe.

At the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, President Trump has fired a safety commissioner and pushed executive orders that threaten NRC independence, making it vulnerable to industry or government influence in ways that could increase the risk of a nuclear accident.

And just last week, Trump fired nearly every member of the US Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board. At every opportunity, Trump is cutting corners with safety and attacking agency independence. This is not normal, and I urge my Republican colleagues on this Committee to conduct real oversight and stand up against President Trump's reckless gutting of independent, expert regulators that keep Americans safe.

Americans want safe and affordable energy – but analyses are pouring in: the Republican Big Ugly Bill will raise energy costs for American families over 400 dollars each year, and cost businesses between 7 and 11 billion dollars more per year. The Big Ugly Bill will decrease our electricity generation capacity by more than 300 gigawatts – at the same time we're facing massive heat waves and exploding electricity demand growth.

Democrats in Congress are standing up for hardworking families who need lower energy bills, not a Republican Rate Hike that gives handouts to billionaires while hiking electricity bills, killing jobs, poisoning our air, and selling out America's future to Big Oil and China.

I yield back.

Ms. CASTOR. So thank you very much, and I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired, and the Chair now recognizes the chair of the full committee, the gentleman from Kentucky's 2nd District, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BRETT GUTHRIE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you, Chairman Latta, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. We appreciate it.

Pipelines are critical to the safe transportation and distribution of oil, natural gas, and other energy products, along with hazardous liquid products. As demand for energy is projected to skyrocket over the next decade, we must ensure our Nation's pipeline safety laws are ready to meet the moment.

The Energy and Commerce Committee plans an important—plays an important role in the reauthorizing of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's, PHMSA, pipeline safety program. Under the new leadership of Chair Latta and myself, I hope we can work in a bipartisan manner. As my friend from Florida said, we will work to do that in this effort.

PHMSA oversees the U.S. energy pipeline network of over 3.3 million miles of onshore pipelines. To accomplish this task, PHMSA partners with States to ensure the entire network is safely operated and maintained. According to a 2019 PHMSA report, pipelines delivered 180 million gallons of energy per safety incident, while trucks delivered only 55 million gallons of safety incident, and trains only—trucks 55, States—trains only 50.

Over the last 20 years, serious pipeline incidents have been reduced by approximately 34 percent. To continue this downward trend, PHMSA must operate within its statutory authority and maintain its focus on public safety. Unfortunately, under the previous administration PHMSA strayed from this core responsibility, focusing more on environmental agendas than safety. The current PHMSA has a busy docket, promulgating and finalizing statutory-mandated regulations, updating regulations that are decades old, and refocusing the agency on its essential mission.

Today's hearing will provide an important foundation the committee—as the committee examines the status of outstanding rulemaking from the PIPES Act of 2020, ways to close penalty loopholes for pipeline vandalism, opportunities to streamline processes, and the role emerging technologies can play in mitigating risk and increasing efficiencies across the pipeline system.

I believe a major consideration for the future of pipeline safety is ensuring adequate capacity is available. As operators work to replace aging infrastructure, we must have capacity available to take pipelines temporarily offline for upgrades and repairs while still meeting the needs of American consumers.

Pipelines are essential to the energy security of our country. I look forward to working with Chair Latta and Ranking Members Pallone and Castor to strengthen our Nation's pipeline network.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Guthrie follows:]

Chairman Brett Guthrie
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy
"Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy."
July 22, 2025

As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Chairman Latta, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Pipelines are critical to the safe transportation and distribution of oil, natural gas, other energy products, along with hazardous liquid products. As demand for energy is projected to skyrocket over the next decade, we must ensure our nation's pipeline safety laws are ready to meet the moment.

The Energy and Commerce Committee plays an important role in the reauthorization of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) pipeline safety program. Under the new leadership of Chair Latta and myself, I hope we can work in a bipartisan manner in this effort.

PHMSA oversees the U.S. energy pipeline network of over 3.3 million miles of onshore pipelines. To accomplish this task, PHMSA partners with States to ensure the entire network is safely operated and maintained.

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I believe a major consideration for the future of pipeline safety is ensuring adequate capacity is available. As operators work to replace aging infrastructure, we must have capacity available to take pipelines temporarily offline for upgrades and repairs, while still meeting the needs of American consumers.

Pipelines are essential to the energy security of the United States. I look forward to working with Chair Latta and Ranking Members Pallone and Castor to strengthen our nation's pipeline network.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. GUTHRIE. And thank you, and I will yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. And seeing if the ranking member of the full committee is here—OK.

Well, at this time what we will do, we will informally pass on the ranker's opening statement and go right to our witnesses today. But this concludes the Member opening statements, and the Chair reminds Members that, pursuant to the committee rules, all Members' opening statements will be made part of the record.

We want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today and taking the time to testify before the subcommittee. Each witness will have the opportunity to give an opening statement, followed by a round of questions from the Members.

Our witnesses for today are Mr. Andrew Black, the president and CEO at the Liquid Energy Pipeline Association; Ms. Sarah Miller, president and CEO at GPA Midstream; Mr. Bill Caram, the executive director of Pipeline Safety Trust; and Mr. Jim Moriarty, the executive vice president and general counsel at the Chesapeake Utilities Corporation.

And again, as I mentioned, the Chair appreciates all of our witnesses appearing before us today, and you will each be given 5 minutes for an opening statement.

And just a quick update on our mics here, that you have to pull them up close so they can hear you. Press the button, and hopefully you will see a little light come on. Sometimes it is kind of difficult to see.

Oh, and you know what? Before we do, since we formerly passed on the ranker, we will hear from the ranker first and then go right to the witnesses. So the gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. PALLONE. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I came right up from the other hearing, but I guess they are all happening too quickly. Let me see what I have here.

It has been 661 days since the last pipeline safety reauthorization expired, so I am glad we are here today because there is a lot to talk about.

Pipeline safety risks are just as prevalent as ever. But since President Trump took office, enforcement actions against pipeline operators by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA, have fallen off a cliff. In fact, it has been so long since we have had a hearing, I haven't used the word PHMSA much. It is not because pipelines have somehow magically gotten safer since January 20, but instead it is because the Trump administration is once again prioritizing profits for their favorite industries over the safety of the American people. And that is why Trump is—forcing out the public servants that helped to keep our pipelines safe is so wrong.

Nearly all of PHMSA's top staff have left the agency, and dozens of employees have either been forced out or been paid to leave. And the Trump administration is simply letting the agency bleed out talent that was vital to keeping Americans safe.

And the Trump administration isn't just haphazardly enforcing law at PHMSA. Sometimes it is not following the law at all. The last reauthorization signed by President Trump required that PHMSA issue a final rule improving leak detection in gas pipelines. PHMSA finalized that rule in January, in the final days of the Biden administration, but the Trump administration clawed it back from the printer before it could even be published. It did the same thing with the proposed rule on the safety for carbon dioxide pipelines which was required by pipeline safety legislation over a decade ago.

So PHMSA has even ignored basic transparency requirements that it publish monthly updates on its progress on finalizing rules and regulations required by law. All of this is clear that the Trump administration has no interest in following the law, and that is why it is so important that this committee worked together on pipeline safety reauthorization not just across the aisle here, but with our colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee.

We must ensure that pipelines are safe and that the administration and pipeline operators are following the law. If Republicans want to pass a pipeline safety reauthorization package this Congress, I would urge them not to follow the process that committee Republicans used last Congress. Committee Republicans insisted on a legislative hearing and markup on a bipartisan bill that cut authorized funding levels by nearly 20 percent and had several poison-pill provisions completely unrelated to safety. They also refused to engage with the Transportation Committee on compromise legislation and, as a result, never even moved a bill to the floor.

In short, Republicans should not follow that same playbook. As we look to reauthorize the pipeline safety program, it is important that we focus on safety. Committee Republicans should not try to gut bipartisan programs we established in our last bill. It is also critical that we give PHMSA the resources and tools we know it needs to keep us all safe.

So finally, because this is our first Energy Subcommittee hearing since Republicans passed their Big, Ugly Bill, I wanted to briefly talk about the harm that that bill will cause American families.

We heard testimony from countless Republican witnesses throughout the first half of this year begging Republicans not to cut vital tax incentives for clean energy or energy affordability programs from the Inflation Reduction Act. They also pleaded with Republicans to stay away from cutting the efforts by the Loan Program Office to keep our energy competitive, especially looking at nuclear power. And Republicans ignored all of these experts' pleas.

And now, as a result, power bills for American families will rise by up to $400 per year, reliability will be undermined, the risk of blackouts will go up, and the climate crisis will get worse.

So Republicans' dangerous energy agenda is basically pickpocketing working families to give handouts to the rich, including the big oil and gas corporations who are among the only ones that stand to benefit from it.

Now, I just wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, this pipeline safety issue is very important to me. We had an incident many years ago when I was in Congress. We had a major explosion in our district.

Certainly in New Jersey we are all very concerned about pipeline safety. And we—you know, and so I just think that, you know, ignoring all this and just cutting all the people, and getting all the—getting rid of all the people that work there, it is just a terrible thing.

I don't understand why pipeline safety can't be bipartisan. It always was in the past. Maybe I am old-fashioned and, you know, nothing is bipartisan anymore. But the bottom line is this really should be. I mean, people care about it, and we should care about it, as well.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"

July 22, 2025

It has been 661 days since the last pipeline safety reauthorization expired, so I am glad we're here today, because there is a lot to talk about.

Pipeline safety risks are just as prevalent as ever, but since President Trump took office, enforcement actions against pipeline operators by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA, have fallen off a cliff. It's not because pipelines have somehow magically gotten safer since January 20. Instead, it's because the Trump Administration is once again prioritizing profits for their favored industries over the safety of the American people.

That's why Trump's forcing out the public servants that help to help keep our pipelines safe. Nearly all of PHMSA's top staff have left the agency, and dozens of employees have either been forced out or been paid to leave. The Trump Administration is simply letting the agency bleed out talent that was vital to keeping Americans safe.

And the Trump Administration isn't just haphazardly enforcing the law at PHMSA. Sometimes it's not following the law at all. The last reauthorization — signed by President Trump — required that PHMSA issue a final rule improving leak detection in gas pipelines. PHMSA finalized that rule in January in the final days of the Biden Administration, but the Trump Administration clawed it back from the printers before it could be published. It did the same thing with a proposed rule on the safety for carbon dioxide pipelines, which was required by pipeline safety legislation over a decade ago.

PHMSA has even ignored basic transparency requirements that it publish monthly updates on its progress on finalizing rules and regulations required by law. All of this is clear – the Trump Administration has no interest in following the law.

That's why it's so important that this Committee work together on pipeline safety reauthorization — not just across the aisle here, but with our colleagues on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and the Senate Commerce Committee. We must ensure pipelines are safe and that the Administration and pipeline operators are following the law.

If Republicans want to pass a pipeline safety reauthorization package this Congress, I urge them not to follow the process that Committee Republicans used last Congress. Committee Republicans insisted on a legislative hearing and markup on a partisan bill that cut PHMSA's authorized funding levels by nearly 20 percent and had several poison pill provisions completely unrelated to safety. They also refused to engage with the Transportation Committee on compromise legislation, and as a result, never even moved a bill to the floor.

In short, Republicans should not follow that same playbook. As we look to reauthorize the pipeline safety program, it's important that we focus on safety. Committee Republicans should NOT try

to gut bipartisan programs we established in our last bill. It is also critical that we give PHMSA the resources and tools we know it needs to keep us all safe.

Finally, because this is our first Energy Subcommittee hearing since Republicans passed their Big Ugly Bill, I want to briefly talk about the harm that bill will cause American families.

We heard testimony from countless Republican witnesses throughout the first half of this year, begging Republicans not to cut vital tax incentives for clean energy, or energy affordability programs from the Inflation Reduction Act. They also pleaded with Republicans to stay away from cutting the efforts by the Loan Programs Office to keep our energy competitive, especially looking at nuclear power.

Well, Republicans ignored all these experts' pleas. And now, as a result, power bills for American families will rise by up to $400 per year, reliability will be undermined, the risk of blackouts will go up, and the climate crisis will get worse.

The Republicans cruel and dangerous energy agenda pickpockets working families to give handouts to the rich, including to Big Oil and Gas corporations who are among the only ones that stand to benefit from it.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time. And at this time, again, we will go back to our witnesses.

And as I mentioned, just pull the mic up close. Press that button, and you will see that when you hit the 4-minute mark it will go yellow with the lights up front, which means you have a minute to conclude your statement, and the red is at 5 minutes.

So with that, Mr. Black, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENTS OF ANDREW J. BLACK, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LIQUID ENERGY PIPELINE ASSOCIATION; SARAH C. MILLER, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GPA MIDSTREAM ASSOCIATION; BILL CARAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PIPELINE SAFETY TRUST; AND JIM MORIARTY, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNSEL, CORPORATE SECRETARY, AND CHIEF POLICY AND RISK OFFICER, CHESAPEAKE UTILITIES CORPORATION

STATEMENT OF ANDREW J. BLACK

Mr. BLACK. Thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member. I am Andy Black, president and CEO of the Liquid Energy Pipeline Association. We have over 50 member companies delivering over 20 billion barrels annually across a nearly 230,000-mile network of pipelines.

America is blessed with abundant energy supplies. Expanding American energy production will send new supply to market and pressure prices downward.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has an important role in ensuring our pipeline network is safe, allowing us to confidently expand our energy infrastructure.

Liquid energy pipelines deliver transportation fuels like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel that families, commuters, businesses, and travelers use to drive and fly where they need to go. Pipelines deliver feed stocks like crude oil, ethane, and butane to make everything from plastics to pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, paints, fabrics, and fuels. Rural home and agricultural fuels like propane delivered by pipeline before traveling locally by truck heat rural homes and farms, dry crops after harvest, and keep livestock barns warm throughout the winter.

As this committee considers the role of pipeline infrastructure and what changes to make to Federal pipeline safety laws, it is important to remember that pipelines are the safest way to deliver energy. More than 99.999 percent of crude oil and petroleum products delivered by pipeline reaches its destination safely. A report prepared for Congress—to Congress by PHMSA found that pipelines were 13 times safer than both trains and trucks. Current pipeline incident statistics also show pipeline safety is improving further. According to publicly available PHMSA data, total liquid pipeline incidents are down 13 percent over the last 5 years. Incidents impacting people and the environment are also down 13 percent over the last 5 years. And when comparing incidents to volume delivered, the decrease is even more striking, with liquid pipe-

line incidents per barrel delivered down 33 percent over those 5 years.

These safety metrics are available in the Pipeline Performance Report and Pipeline Excellence Strategic Plan. In this report you can see how the liquid pipeline industry is addressing key challenges like corrosion, leak detection, and geohazards. You can see how operators are improving pipeline safety by harnessing new technologies, artificial intelligence, safety management systems, and recommended practices.

Declining pipeline incidents over the last 5 years supports a measured approach to reauthorizing pipeline safety laws without major changes or mandates. LEPA does believe there is a role for Congress to encourage PHMSA to leverage technology for pipeline safety, support American energy development through safe pipelines, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of PHMSA programs.

Congress can do more to modernize pipeline safety programs. Key parts of PHMSA's safety regulations are over 20 years old and do not reflect the latest advances in safety, technology, or know-how. High-tech analytic tools like an MRI or an ultrasound you find in the doctor's office are available for pipeline safety. Analytic methods like machine learning and artificial intelligence can help operators digest data to show when a pipeline might be leaking or when it might need maintenance.

This administration is off to a good start, promoting long-needed reforms to PHMSA. PHMSA has announced changes that will improve transparency and issued several notices on important proposals. PHMSA announced regulatory actions to improve special permits, update incident reporting thresholds, and integrate remote sensing technologies for monitoring rights-of-way patrols. LEPA believes Congress can make some of these reforms permanent and provide the agency additional personnel with STEM expertise and pipeline operations experience.

Six of the specific pipeline safety reauthorization provisions LEPA would welcome include: reform PHMSA's special permit program permanently to impose decision deadlines and limit unrelated requirements; strengthen penalties for pipeline safety violations that impair operational facilities or damaged construction sites; fulfill the 2020 congressional mandate of a safety program for idled pipelines; reauthorize without extraneous conditions a technology demonstration pilot program; authorize a voluntary information-sharing program to convene stakeholders to collaborate on safety initiatives similar to FAA's successful program; and authorize risk-based inspections of in-service breakout tanks to reduce unnecessary greenhouse and air pollutant emissions, worker safety threats, and hazardous waste. More recommendations are listed in my written testimony.

Thank you again for the committee's support of pipeline energy infrastructure and the opportunity to testify you—before you today on the benefits of pipelines, including their safety. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Black follows:]

Testimony of Andrew J. Black, President & CEO, Liquid Energy Pipeline Association
Hearing on "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"
July 22, 2025

- LEPA represents 50 member companies delivering over 20 billion barrels of crude oil, refined products, natural gas liquids, and carbon dioxide annually across a nearly a 230,000-mile network.
- America is blessed with abundant energy supplies. Expanding American energy production will send new supply to market and pressure prices downward. Building energy pipeline infrastructure like pipelines will help us deliver more energy to the American people.
- The Energy & Commerce Committee has an important role ensuring our pipeline network is safe, such as through pipeline safety reauthorization, allowing us confidently to expand our energy infrastructure.
- Pipelines are the safest way to deliver energy.
- More than 99.999% of crude oil and petroleum products delivered by pipeline reaches its destination safely.
- A 2018 report prepared for Congress by PHMSA analyzing 10 years of incident data found pipelines were 13 times safer than both trains and trucks.
- An Obama administration analysis found rejecting a major pipeline and shipping the same crude oil by rail would increase the risk of oil release by over 800 times and barrels released by 2.6 times.
- Current PHMSA pipeline incident statistics also show pipeline safety is improving:
    - Total liquids pipeline incidents are down 13% over the last 5 years.
    - Liquids pipeline incidents Impacting People or the Environment (IPE) are also down 13% over the last 5 years.
- Liquids pipeline incidents are decreasing at the same time America's pipelines are delivering more and more energy. Liquids pipeline incidents per barrel delivered are down 33% over the preceding 5 years.
- Declining pipeline incidents over the last 5 years support a measured approach to reauthorizing pipeline safety laws without major changes or new mandates.
- However, LEPA does believe there is a role for Congress to: 1) encourage PHMSA to leverage technology for pipeline safety, 2) support American energy development through safe pipelines, and 3) improve the effectiveness and efficiency of PHMSA programs.

Testimony of Andrew J. Black
President & CEO
Liquid Energy Pipeline Association
before the
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy

Hearing on "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"

July 22, 2025

Thank you, Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Andy Black, and I am President and CEO of the Liquid Energy Pipeline Association. LEPA represents pipeline owners and operators delivering transportation fuels like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, transportation feedstocks like crude oil, home heating fuels like propane and home heating oil, industrial feedstocks like ethane and butane, and low carbon solutions like renewable diesel, liquified petroleum gas and carbon dioxide. We have over 50 member companies delivering over 20 billion barrels annually across a nearly a 230,000-mile network of pipelines.

Thank you for holding this hearing today and highlighting the vital role this Committee has promoting the infrastructure that leads to American prosperity. In recent years, American families and workers have suffered from higher prices on everything from food to housing to energy. America is blessed with abundant energy supplies. Expanding American energy production will send new supply to market and pressure prices downward. Building energy infrastructure like pipelines will help us deliver more energy to the American people. The Energy & Commerce Committee has an important role ensuring our pipeline network is safe, such as through pipeline safety reauthorization, allowing us confidently to expand our energy infrastructure.

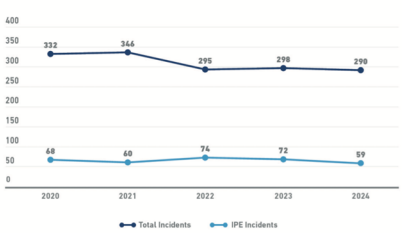
Pipelines deliver the energy products American families use every day. Liquid energy pipelines deliver transportation fuels like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel that families, commuters, businesses and travelers use to drive and fly where they need to go. Pipelines deliver

transportation fuel feedstocks like crude oil and industrial feedstocks like ethane, propane and butane to make everything from plastics to pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, paints and fabrics. Rural home heating and agricultural fuels like propane delivered regionally by pipeline before traveling locally by truck heat rural homes and farms, dry crops after harvest, and keep livestock barns warm throughout the winter.

As the Committee considers the role of pipeline infrastructure and what changes to make to federal pipeline safety laws, it is important to remember pipelines are the safest way to deliver energy. More than 99.999% of crude oil and petroleum products delivered by pipeline reaches its destination safely.

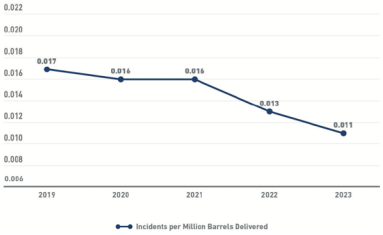
A 2018 report prepared for Congress by PHMSA analyzing 10 years of incident data found pipelines were 13 times safer than both trains and trucks with pipelines experiencing 1 incident for every 720 million gallons delivered and rail incidents occurring every 50 million gallons delivered. An Obama administration analysis found rejecting a major pipeline and shipping the same crude oil by rail would increase the risk of oil release by over 800 times and barrels released by 2.6 times.

Current PHMSA pipeline incident statistics also show pipeline safety is improving. Federal law and regulations require operators to report pipeline incident data to PHMSA. Full year data for 2024 is now available, which allows us to examine current trends in pipeline safety.



TOTAL INCIDENTS VS INCIDENTS IMPACTING PEOPLE OR THE ENVIRONMENT

Pipeline incidents impacting people or the environment decreased 13% from 2020 to 2024. Total pipeline incidents dropped 13% as well over the last five years, with 42 fewer incidents in 2024 compared to 2020. A full description of the specific types of incidents impacting people or the environment can be found on page 60.



INCIDENTS PER MILLION BARRELS DELIVERED

Total incidents per barrel delivered fell 33% from 2019 to 2023 (the most recent year barrels delivered data is available). In 2019, there were 0.017 incidents per million barrels delivered and that fell to 0.011 incidents per million barrels delivered in 2023. That means that, at the same time pipeline operators delivered 16% more crude oil and petroleum products, total pipeline incidents were down 22%.

According to publicly available PHMSA data, total liquids pipeline incidents are down 13% over the last 5 years. Liquids pipeline incidents Impacting People or the Environment (IPE) are also down 13% over the last 5 years. When comparing incidents to volume delivered, the decrease is even more striking, with liquids pipeline incidents per barrel delivered down 33% over the preceding 5 years. Or put another way, liquids pipeline incidents are decreasing at the same time America's pipelines are delivering more and more energy.

These safety metrics are available in a new report, the *API-LEPA 2024 Pipeline Performance Report & 2023-2025 Pipeline Excellence Strategic Plan*. Each year, LEPA and API download PHMSA incident data to check on how we are doing, where we are doing well and where we need improvement. Those areas of need, both appearing in the data and collected through engagement of our stakeholders, help guide industry-wide safety initiatives. In this report, you can see how the liquids pipeline industry is addressing key challenges like corrosion, leak detection and geohazards. You can see how operators are improving pipeline by harnessing new technologies, artificial intelligence, safety management systems and new recommended practices. You can also see how we are trying to do better on public engagement, cybersecurity, conservation and attracting our future workforce.

Declining pipeline incidents over the last 5 years support a measured approach to reauthorizing pipeline safety laws without major changes or new mandates. However, LEPA

does believe there is a role for Congress to: 1) encourage PHMSA to leverage technology for pipeline safety, 2) support American energy development through safe pipelines, and 3) improve the effectiveness and efficiency of PHMSA programs.

Congress can do more to help modernize pipeline safety programs. Key parts of PHMSA safety regulations are over 20 years old and do not reflect the latest advances in safety technology or know-how. Hi-tech inspection and analytical tools, like an MRI or ultrasound in the doctor's office, are available for pipeline safety. Analytic methods harnessing machine learning and other forms of artificial intelligence can help operators digest data to show when a pipeline might be leaking or when it needs new maintenance. The Committee can adopt provisions to reauthorize a pipeline safety technology demonstration program and promote safety sharing through a voluntary information system.

Congress can also support the contribution of pipelines to helping unleash American energy. Smart pipeline policies that will promote the pipeline energy infrastructure needed to deliver American energy dominance include reforming PHMSA's special permit program with both a bar on extraneous conditions and a decision deadline, closing loopholes in penalties for pipeline attacks, and targeted updates to CO_2 pipeline safety standards.

Lastly, LEPA believes Congress can help PHMSA increase the effectiveness and transparency of its pipeline safety programs and requirements. This administration is off to a great start bringing long-needed reforms to PHMSA. In just a few short months, PHMSA has announced changes that will improve bring greater transparency to how it interprets regulatory requirements and enhance due process during PHMSA enforcement proceedings. This spring, PHMSA issued several Advance Notices of Proposed Rulemaking to gather stakeholder input on important reforms, such as modernizing pipeline repair criteria and reducing regulatory burden. PHMSA also recently announced regulatory actions to improve special permits, update incident reporting thresholds, and integrate remote sensing technologies for monitoring right-of-way patrols. LEPA believes Congress can make several of these reforms permanent through statute,

increase transparency in the PHMSA inspection program and provide the agency additional pipeline safety regulatory personnel with STEM expertise and pipeline operations experience. Specific pipeline safety reauthorization provisions LEPA would welcome include:

- Reform PHMSA's Special Permit program to impose permit review decision deadlines and limit unrelated permit requirements
- Strengthen penalties for pipeline safety violations that impair operation of facilities or damage construction sites
- Fulfill the 2020 Congressional mandate of a safety program for idled pipelines
- Reauthorize without extraneous conditions a PHMSA technology demonstration pilot program
- Authorize a Voluntary Information Sharing program to convene stakeholders to collaborate on safety initiatives, similar to FAA's successful program
- Authorize in statute risk-based inspections of in-service breakout tanks to reduce unnecessary greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions, worker safety threats, and hazardous waste when shown to achieve an equivalent level of safety
- Provide defendants the opportunity for a formal PHMSA hearing, and protect security or commercially sensitive information presented as evidence in PHMSA hearings open to the public
- Increase the transparency of PHMSA inspection program with reporting on inspection priorities, dates and locations
- Require PHMSA review of consensus safety improvement standards
- Provide a targeted update of federal CO_2 pipeline requirements to extend regulatory coverage to gaseous CO_2 and require CO_2-specific incident dispersion modeling (topography, weather, operating conditions, trace compounds)
- Authorize PHMSA to hire and compensate competitively additional regulatory personnel with STEM expertise or pipeline operating experience

An additional note on leveraging new technologies that provides a case study on the frustrating reality of bureaucracy and red tape in government. In the 2020 PIPES Act, Congress recognized pipeline safety could benefit from harnessing the latest hi-tech inspection

technologies and analytics. As I mentioned, there's so much modern technology and analytics like artificial intelligence can benefit pipeline safety. Congress authorized PHMSA to conduct a pipeline safety technology demonstration pilot program under certain conditions.

However, in implementing the technology demonstration program, PHMSA under the previous administration imposed a host of additional administrative, regulatory and legal conditions beyond what Congress itself mandated. As a result, PHMSA received no applications to conduct technology pilots and the program sunseted. Pipeline operators cited the additional conditions PHMSA imposed in its implementation guidance as making the program infeasible. PHMSA bureaucratic red tape from the last administration effectively strangled this program in its crib. An opportunity now exists, and LEPA supports restoring the will of Congress and reauthorizing this program without additional bureaucratic red tape or conditions.

Thank you again for the Committee's support of pipeline energy infrastructure and the opportunity to testify before you today on the benefits of pipelines, including their safety.

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Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much.

And Ms. Miller, you are now recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF SARAH C. MILLER

Ms. MILLER. Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of GPA Midstream Association. My name is Sarah Miller, and I serve as the president and CEO of GPA Midstream, an organization that has represented the U.S. midstream energy sector since 1921.

Safety of employees, contractors, and communities is the highest priority for GPA Midstream member companies. Our nearly 50 corporate members are responsible for the safe and efficient gathering, processing, transporting, and marketing of natural gas, natural gas liquids, crude oil, and refined products. Our members directly employ over 57,000 individuals and indirectly support more than 600,000 jobs across the U.S. economy. In 2023 GPA Midstream members contributed over $206 billion in economic impact, operating more than 506,000 miles of pipeline and over 365 natural gas processing facilities.

Our members are an invisible link between raw natural gas and crude oil produced at the wellhead and distribution of products to consumers for heating, electricity production, transportation, steelmaking, fertilizer production, plastics, high-tech devices, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and much more.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects that U.S. production and consumption of natural gas and petroleum, which includes NGLs, will remain strong through at least 2050. Similarly, Rice University's Baker Institute projects natural gas and crude will sustain a steady share of the global energy mix also through 2050. That is to say that it remains essential to continue our focus on pipeline safety for existing and new pipeline infrastructure to assure we can meet energy demands in the U.S. and around the world.

GPA Midstream members support reauthorization of PHMSA's pipeline safety programs, with the goal to ensure pipelines remain the safest method for transporting affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy while also facilitating innovation and efficiency. We seek legislative and regulatory predictability and certainty to enable prudent investment decisions for the benefit of communities and investors alike. Our members advocate many goals for the reauthorization of PHMSA's pipeline safety program, including several reflected in this committee's bill from the last congressional session.

Specifically, our members appreciate improved due process enforcement—in enforcement matters, reform of the special permit program, strengthening penalties for those who damage infrastructure, and the recognition of opportunity for innovation and alternative technologies. Today I offer three recommendations especially meaningful to our members.

First, we urge elimination of duplicative oversight of in-plant plant gas piping. Hazardous liquid in-plant gas piping—I am sorry. Hazardous liquid in-plant piping is exempt by law from PHMSA's

regulation, but the regulation of in-plant—of gas in-plant piping is not. In-plant piping is within the jurisdiction of other robust safety programs such as OSHA's Process Management Standards. Aligning the treatment of gas and liquid and in-plant piping would eliminate regulatory redundancy without compromising safety.

We are grateful to PHMSA for recognizing such redundancy and issuing a notice to proposed rulemaking to codify an exception for in-plant piping systems into the gas pipeline safety regulations. We also seek legislative certainty for the elimination of such redundancy.

Second, in recent years there have been more rulemakings aimed at gathering pipelines. The physical and commercial operations of gathering pipelines can differ greatly from transmission pipelines. Therefore, we request the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee facilitate greater input from gathering pipeline operators for more effective gathering pipeline safety regulations.

Third, we encourage the use of more performance-based measures and less prescriptive regulations to achieve safety goals. Performance-based measures consider relevant operating conditions and assess risks to achieve meaningful safety priorities. Performance-based measures will also facilitate a longer-term reauthorization period for PHMSA's programs, as they allow for evolving technological advancement and best practices proven by time and experience to achieve safety.

In conclusion, GPA Midstream is committed to working with Congress and PHMSA to ensure the continued safety and reliability of our Nation's energy infrastructure. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and stand ready to serve as a resource as you move forward with reauthorization.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Miller follows:]

Testimony of Sarah C. Miller
President & CEO
GPA Midstream Association
before the
Subcommittee on Energy
of the Committee on Energy and Commerce
of the U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"

July 22, 2025

Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of GPA Midstream Association. My name is Sarah Miller, and I serve as President and CEO of GPA Midstream, an organization that has represented the U.S. midstream energy sector since 1921.

Safety – of employees, contractors, and communities – is the highest priority for GPA Midstream member companies. Our nearly 50 corporate members are responsible for the safe and efficient gathering, processing, transporting, and marketing of natural gas, natural gas liquids, crude oil, and refined products. Our members directly employ over 57,000 individuals and indirectly support more than 600,000 jobs across the U.S. economy. In 2023, GPA Midstream members contributed over $206 billion in economic impact, operating more than 506,000 miles of pipelines and over 365 natural gas processing facilities. Our members are an invisible link between raw natural gas and crude oil produced at the wellhead and the distribution of products to consumers for heating, electricity production, transportation, steelmaking, fertilizer production, plastics, high-tech devices, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and much more.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects that U.S. production and consumption of natural gas and petroleum (including natural gas liquids) will remain strong through at least 2050. Similarly, Rice University's Baker Institute projects natural gas and crude oil will sustain a steady share of the global energy mix through 2050. That is to say that it remains essential to continue our focus on pipeline safety for existing and new pipeline infrastructure to assure we can meet energy demands in the U.S. and around the world.

GPA Midstream members support reauthorization of the pipeline safety programs of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) with the goal to ensure pipelines remain the safest method for transporting affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy, while also facilitating innovation and efficiency. We seek legislative and regulatory predictability and certainty, to enable prudent investment decisions for the benefit of communities and investors alike.

Our members advocate many goals for reauthorization of PHMSA's pipeline safety programs, including several reflected in this Committee's bill from the last congressional session. Specifically, our members appreciate improved due process in enforcement matters, reform of the special permit program, strengthening penalties for those damaging infrastructure, and recognition of opportunities for innovation and alternative technologies. In the interest of time, I focus my message today by offering three recommendations especially meaningful to our members:

First, we urge elimination of duplicative oversight of in-plant gas piping. Hazardous liquid in-plant piping is exempt by law from PHMSA regulation, but regulation of gas in-plant piping has lacked similar clarity. In-plant pipeline systems are typically low risk, operate at lower pressures, and are confined within plant boundaries or in short sections between adjacent plants.

They are also within the jurisdiction of other robust safety programs, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Process Safety Management standards. Aligning the treatment of gas and liquid in-plant piping would eliminate regulatory redundancy without compromising safety. We are grateful to PHMSA for recognizing such redundancy and recently issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to codify an exception for in-plant piping systems into the gas pipeline safety regulations. We also seek legislative certainty for the elimination of such unnecessary redundancy.

Second, with regard to the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC), we request representation with knowledge of the unique aspects of gathering pipelines. PHMSA's advisory committees play a vital role in shaping pipeline safety rules. In recent years there have been more rulemakings aimed at gathering lines. The physical and commercial operations of gathering pipelines can differ greatly from transmission pipelines. Therefore, we request that GPAC facilitate greater input from gathering pipeline operators for more effective gathering pipeline safety regulations.

Third, we encourage the use of more performance-based measures, and less prescriptive regulations, to achieve safety goals. Performance-based measures consider relevant operating conditions and assessed risks to achieve meaningful safety priorities. Performance-based measures will also facilitate a longer-term reauthorization period for PHMSA's programs, as they allow for evolving technological advancement and best practices proven by time and experience to achieve safety. For example, advanced in-line inspection tools can better assess pipeline anomalies, limiting the need for pipe excavation for inspection and replacement. Performance-based integrity management with insights from advanced tools can achieve the safety priorities

with efficient use of resources, less interruption of service, cost savings, and fewer blowdowns. Regulations should not prescribe the unnecessary replacement of safe pipelines.

In conclusion, GPA Midstream is committed to working with Congress and PHMSA to ensure the continued safety and reliability of our nation's energy infrastructure. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and stand ready to serve as a resource as you move forward with reauthorization.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much for your opening statement.

Mr. Caram, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF BILL CARAM

Mr. CARAM. Good morning, Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee. I am Bill Caram, executive director of the Pipeline Safety Trust, which was created after the 1999 Olympic pipeline tragedy in Bellingham, Washington, that killed three boys. We serve as an independent national watchdog over the pipeline industry and its regulators.

On average, a significant pipeline incident occurs every 32 hours in America, nearly one every day. Since this subcommittee's last pipeline safety hearing last year, in January 2024, 18 people have been killed and 45 hospitalized from pipeline incidents. The past 2 years have been the deadliest in nearly 15 years, with 30 deaths, including a 5-year-old in Missouri, a 15-year-old in Utah, and an 82-year-old pastor's wife in Mississippi. Our shared goal of zero incidents feels unreachable when we haven't yet been able to prevent these tragic deaths.

Looking at pipeline safety metrics over the last 10 years or longer doesn't show that we are making progress. The number of significant incidents each year remains frustratingly flat. Other metrics, such as incidents impacting people or the environment, display a slight downward trend, so slight that statisticians would say could easily be due to chance rather than actual improvement. And while we did make meaningful progress on fatalities in the previous decade, the last decade shows a slight upward trend, though like other metrics not statistically significant.

Pipeline failures don't just kill and injure people and damage ecological areas; they cost billions and disrupt energy supplies. Over the last 10 years, pipeline incidents have been reported by operators to cost over $6 billion. Incidents on pipelines such as Colonial's refined products pipeline that supplies the East Coast with 45 percent of its liquid energy have put critical energy reliability at risk.

But the same solutions that save lives and protect our environment also strengthen our economy and energy security. Making a meaningful difference on pipeline safety will require three elements: improved regulations, effective enforcement, and widespread adoption of pipeline safety management systems, or PSMS.

In many cases, Congress has hamstrung PHMSA from developing effective regulations. Provisions in the pipeline safety statute like the extra burdensome cost benefit requirement and the nonapplication clause make it extremely difficult for PHMSA to develop lifesaving regulations.

Despite these limitations, there are ways to make a meaningful difference on pipeline safety. For example, as recently recommended by the NTSB, natural gas alarms or methane detectors would undoubtedly save lives. Incidents in Japan have declined by 90 percent alongside the adoption of these alarms.

Another idea is fire shut-off valves. These simple devices automatically close when exposed to heat, preventing gas from fueling house fires. They are inexpensive, maintenance-free, and easily installed.

We need modernized regulations for carbon dioxide and hydrogen blended pipelines. Congress has incentivized this infrastructure without addressing the regulatory and research gaps that put communities on the front lines of significant safety risks. This year marks 5 years since the Denbury carbon dioxide pipeline failure in Satartia, Mississippi, that sent nearly 50 people to the hospital. That harrowing night laid bare many of the risks and regulatory shortfalls with these pipelines.

Increasing authorized resources to PHMSA is also necessary. Not only has the agency been chronically underfunded, but the additional miles of jurisdictional pipe and the potential build-out of carbon dioxide and hydrogen pipelines demands an increase in resources from Congress both to the agency and, just as significantly, to the State programs.

But even the best regulations are meaningless without robust enforcement. Recently, enforcement case initiations have declined drastically, down nearly 65 percent compared to this point in the first Trump administration. According to a recent PHMSA report to Congress on the adoption of PSMS, or Pipeline Safety Management Systems, among gas distribution operators, while most pipeline mileage is owned by operators committed to PSMS, only half of all operators have made this commitment. To improve safety we need industrywide adoption: all systems, all operators, large and small.

As you discuss how to move forward on authorizing PHMSA's pipeline safety program and make improvements to the law, I implore you to think of the empty seats at dinner tables across the country because of pipeline failures. Eighteen dinner tables are missing someone just since last year's pipeline safety hearing alone. Please ensure PHMSA meets its responsibility to the American people. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Caram follows:]

Pipeline Safety TRUST

Credible.
Independent.
In the public interest.

TESTIMONY OF THE PIPELINE SAFETY TRUST

Presented by:

Bill Caram, Executive Director

FOR THE

Subcommittee on Energy
of the
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives

Hearing on:

Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy

July 22, 2025

1812 Cornwall Ave., Suite 200, Bellingham, WA 98225 360-543-5686 www.pstrust.org

Good morning, Committee Chair Guthrie, Subcommittee Chair Latta, Committee Ranking Member Pallone, Subcommittee Ranking Member Castor, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to speak today on the vital subject of pipeline safety. My name is Bill Caram, and I am the Executive Director of the Pipeline Safety Trust.

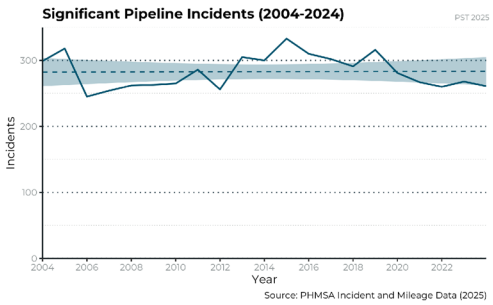
The Pipeline Safety Trust was created after the Olympic Pipe Line tragedy in Bellingham, Washington in 1999. That entirely preventable failure spilled nearly a quarter-million gallons of gasoline into a beautiful salmon stream in the heart of our community which eventually ignited and killed three boys. The U.S. Justice Department was so appalled at the operations of the pipeline company and equally appalled at the lax oversight from the federal government, that they asked the federal courts to set aside money from the settlement to create the Pipeline Safety Trust as an independent national watchdog organization over the pipeline industry and its regulators.

We work to ensure that no other community must endure the senseless grief that Bellingham has had to experience from a pipeline tragedy. Sadly, there have been many senseless pipeline tragedies and disasters since Bellingham. I am here today, hoping that we can continue to work together to help move towards our shared goal of zero incidents.

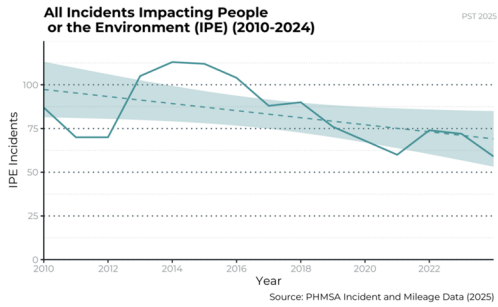
Pipeline Safety Data

Since this subcommittee held its last hearing on pipeline safety, just 18 months ago, on January 18, 2024, 18 people have been killed and 45 people have been injured to the point of in-patient hospitalization. There have been 881 reportable incidents, with over 400 of those deemed "significant" by PHMSA standards. That means there has been a significant incident nearly every day (a significant incident every 1.32 days, on average) and nearly four people killed or seriously injured every month since this subcommittee's last hearing.

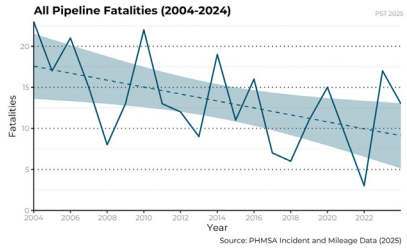
An analysis of trends within the publicly available data from the PHMSA database does not show measurable improvement. Looking at significant incidents on all systems over the last 20 years, we see insufficient progress towards lowering the number of significant incidents, let alone progress towards our shared goal of zero incidents.

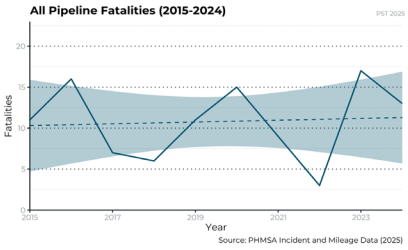


For hazardous liquid pipelines, a multi-stakeholder group including PHMSA, the industry, and the Pipeline Safety Trust created a specialized metric for tracking progress, accidents Impacting People or the Environment (IPE). Looking at those incidents going back to the metric's origin in the PHMSA data in 2010, we see a very slight downward trend. This is not statistically significant[1]. We need meaningful progress.



And while we have made some progress over the last 20 years on fatalities, it's clear that progress made early on but stalled for the last 10 years.



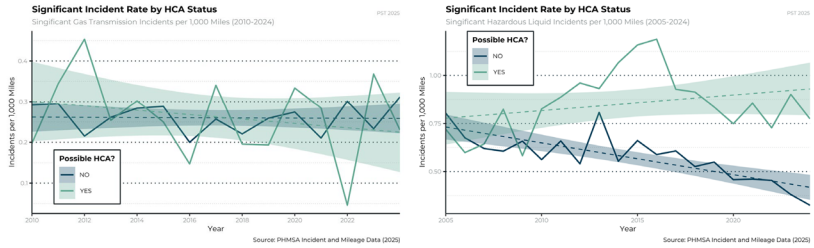


Integrity Management

A hallmark of pipeline safety regulations is the Integrity Management (IM) program. The regulations require operators to identify the areas of high, and sometimes moderate, consequence, and place stronger regulatory requirements on the sections of pipeline where failure could impact those areas. This program has led to some success. Due to requirements of operators to assess their pipelines with tools such as in-line inspections, causes of incidents that are more easily mitigated by these tools have decreased over time. This is most clearly seen with incidents caused by corrosion in High Consequence Areas (HCA).

[1] Using a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$

More broadly, the Integrity Management program requires an operator to identify all potential threats to the sections of pipeline that could impact an HCA, create a plan to mitigate those threats, and implement that plan. Given that, we would expect to see significantly lower incident rates within HCAs compared to outside HCAs if IM was functioning properly. However, we see similar incident rates within HCAs for gas transmission pipelines and significantly higher incident rates for hazardous liquid pipelines within HCAs.



There may be other reasons for this discrepancy besides program shortcomings. Unfortunately, I don't have any answers, but I think it's important stakeholders come together to figure out why this is happening and decide if we need to change the program. It's also important to note that PHMSA has made changes to the gas transmission IM program that are just now going into effect. The impact of those changes will take time to see. However, also important to note, PHMSA recently published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Repair Criteria, which seeks input on making changes to IM programs. This ANPRM is written from a deregulatory perspective, hoping to alleviate operator burden and cost for repairs on defects on pipelines within HCAs. This would be the wrong direction for pipeline safety.

Recent Pipeline Failures

The National Transportation Safety Board's open investigations and recent reports give a glimpse into the current state of pipeline safety. The NTSB has nine open investigations, a very high number compared to its history, covering a host of pipeline-caused explosions in Jackson, MS, Youngstown, OH, Bel Air, MD, South Jordan, UT, Avondale, LA, Hutchinson, KS, Lexington, MO, and most recently Crestwood, IL. Recently finalized investigation reports include a million-gallon oil spill off the coast of Louisiana and a factory explosion that killed seven people. NTSB investigators, sadly, have their hands full.

In December, the NTSB held a Board meeting to discuss the 2023 UGI Utilities pipeline failure in West Reading, PA that resulted in an explosion that killed seven people and injured 11.[2] At the meeting, NTSB discussed the failed piece of pipeline infrastructure made from Aldyl A plastic

[2] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *UGI Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Explosion and Fire* https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD23LR002.aspx.

with family members of the victims present. PHMSA has known these Aldyl A components are prone to failure for decades.

The NTSB is also investigating an Enbridge pipeline explosion that occurred in November 2024 in South Jordan, UT that killed a 15-year-old child. The preliminary report finds that the pipeline was also Aldyl A.[3]

Just last year, in Jackson, MS, pipelines operated by Atmos Energy appear to have fueled two home explosions, one of which killed the 81-year-old wife of a community pastor. An NTSB preliminary report describes what appears to be an under-maintained system full of leaks. Neighbors had complained repeatedly about the smell of gas. Atmos didn't find any leaks it deemed to be hazardous before the home exploded.[4]

On the hazardous liquids side, we've seen two recent failures that have contaminated drinking water wells, and another incident on a chronically failing system. An Energy Transfer pipeline in Pennsylvania was discovered to have been leaking jet fuel. Evidence suggests this pipeline may have been leaking for at least 16 months, possibly much longer, after many complaints about the taste and smell of residents' water. And in December, an Enterprise Products pipeline spilled 23,000 gallons of gasoline, contaminating nine drinking water wells. And earlier this year, the Keystone Pipeline leaked yet again, this time spilling about 110,000 gallons of crude oil in North Dakota.

We still have a long way to go on pipeline safety.

5 Year Anniversary of the Denbury Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Failure in Satartia, MS

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the five-year anniversary of the harrowing carbon dioxide pipeline failure in Satartia, MS. Five years have passed since nearly 50 people went to the hospital experiencing seizures, loss of consciousness, foaming at the mouth, and many other terrifying effects of carbon dioxide exposure.[5] Denbury's failure in Satartia laid bare many glaring regulatory shortfalls that have been clearly identified, but five years later, we haven't modernized the regulations. It took over 12 years for PHMSA to modernize regulations with lessons learned from PG&E's devastation in San Bruno. I hope it doesn't take nearly as long for PHMSA to update its carbon dioxide pipeline safety regulations with lessons learned from Denbury's disaster.

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[3] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Enbridge Inc. Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosion* https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD25FR001.aspx.

[4] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosions and Fires* (Feb. 14, 2024) https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD24FR003.aspx.

[5] U.S. Dep't of Transp., Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin, *Failure Investigation Report – Denbury Gulf Coast Pipelines, LLC – Pipeline Rupture/Natural Force Damage* (May 26, 2022) https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/2022-05/Failure%20Investigation%20Report%20-%20Denbury%20Gulf%20Coast%20Pipeline.pdf.

Economic Impact and Reliability

While economic impact and reliability are not central to the Pipeline Safety Trust's mission, I thought it prudent to address these issues in relation to pipeline safety given the significance to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and its members.

Over the last 10 years, pipeline incidents have been reported by operators to cost over $6 billion. Incidents on pipelines such as Colonial's refined products pipeline that supplies the East Coast with 45% of its gasoline, diesel, heating oil, and jet fuel have put critical energy reliability at risk.

Pipeline failures don't just kill people; they cost billions, disrupt energy supplies, and undermine America's energy leadership. But the same solutions that save lives and protect our environment also strengthen our economy and energy security. Underfunded oversight and weak regulations create supply chain vulnerabilities that threaten energy reliability. Every dollar invested in inspection could prevent hundreds of dollars in disruption costs.

Congressional Oversight

The Pipeline Safety Trust urges Congress to fulfill its oversight responsibilities regarding PHMSA by requesting information about the status of staff reductions. We have heard very little official news from PHMSA about how many staff members have accepted retirement resignation offers or been terminated. We have heard from news sources about the high level of turnover at the senior leadership level, which, if true, represents an enormous drain of knowledge and experience from the agency. We haven't heard anything about the losses from elsewhere within the agency, though it appears from PHMSA's website that the Community Liaison department, PHMSA's department that engages with members of the public, has gone from 13 employees to three.[6] I hope it's obvious that three employees are not nearly enough to engage with an entire nation of people living among over three million miles of pipelines. Full staff levels at a small safety agency such as PHMSA are essential to meet its responsibilities to the public.

Also, we encourage Congress to seek answers from PHMSA to explain the sudden drop in enforcement case initiations under the first few months of new leadership. The number of cases posted to PHMSA's Enforcement Transparency website[7] represents the lowest number of cases initiated within the first months of any administration.

Legislative Priorities to Improve Pipeline Safety

While everyone on today's panel supports the goal of zero incidents, unfortunately, as my testimony has demonstrated, we have a long way to go. I commend this subcommittee for working on pipeline safety legislation.

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[6] U.S. Dept. of Transp., Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin, Community Liaison Services, https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/cats.htm

[7] U.S. Dept. of Transp, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin., *Summary of Enforcement Activity: Nationwide* (May 1, 2025) https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/enforcement-data/summaries.

The Pipeline Safety Trust believes that making a meaningful difference on pipeline safety involves three components: improved regulations, financially meaningful enforcement, and widespread adoption of Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS). Congress can play a key role in each of these efforts.

Critical to each of these is the existence of a strong regulator, both in PHMSA and each of the state programs. Not only has the agency been chronically underfunded, Congress has also hamstrung PHMSA with statutory restrictions such as the extra burdensome cost-benefit requirement, of which PHMSA is the only safety agency laden with this onerous and overly restrictive obligation. Also, the non-application clause, forbidding PHMSA from applying certain standards to existing pipelines, prevents the agency from being as strong a regulator as necessary to ensure safe communities and a healthy environment.

PHMSA Funding and State Programs

Congress can empower PHMSA to be a stronger regulator by giving it the resources it needs, which involves a substantial increase in funding. Congress has substantially expanded PHMSA's responsibilities, but funding has remained stagnant. For example, nearly 100,000 miles of gas gathering lines have finally come under PHMSA regulations and another approximately 300,000 miles are under new reporting requirements. Also on the horizon is a new generation of pipelines carrying carbon dioxide and hydrogen, requiring new expertise and personnel. State programs, responsible for oversight of more than 80% of the nation's pipeline mileage, are also feeling the squeeze on their capacity.

Because of the lack of resources, PHMSA has been reliant on the industry it is tasked to regulate for technical expertise on rulemaking. A 2015 Politico investigation[8] found that PHMSA is an agency "that lacks the manpower to inspect the nation's… oil and gas lines, that grants the industry it regulates significant power to influence the rule-making process, and that has stubbornly failed to take a more aggressive regulatory role, even when ordered by Congress to do so." The fundamental resource and capacity challenges identified in that investigation remain significant today.

Currently, state utility commissions and state pipeline inspectors can take over direct safety authority and oversight of intrastate gas pipelines from PHMSA. These state programs can be reimbursed by PHMSA for up to 80% of their spending. However, in recent years, no state has been reimbursed at the maximum level. In 2023, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) wrote a letter[9] to Congress requesting sufficient funding for PHMSA to be able to reimburse state safety grants at the 80% rate. PST agrees that state inspection

[8] Andrew Restuccia & Elana Schor, *Pipelines Blow up and People Die*, POLITICO (Apr. 21, 2015) https://www.politico.com/story/2015/04/the-little-pipeline-agency-that-couldnt-217227.
[9] Letter from Greg White on behalf of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Sept. 18, 2023) (regarding pipeline safety/PHMSA reauthorization legislation).

programs in good standing with PHMSA should be granted 80% of their expenditures. Thus, Congress should appropriate PHMSA with enough funding to accomplish this.

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's PIPES Act of 2023[10] proposed a funding increase of about 10%. PST would like to see PHMSA's budget be increased by at least 30%. This recommendation is based on factors such as inflation, PHMSA's increased authority for regulating new types of pipelines, and PHMSA's historic underfunding. Inflation has increased costs 24% since PHMSA was last authorized in December 2020.[11] Accounting for inflation, a 10% increase would not even be equivalent to PHMSA's previous funding levels and would in fact place PHMSA even more behind.

Rupture Mitigation Valves

Because of the statutory limitations described above, PHMSA's improved regulations on rupture mitigation valves do not apply to existing pipelines, including on older pipes in areas that could affect densely populated or ecologically sensitive areas. Arguably these are the pipelines that need this technology the most.

In 2022, PHMSA revised its pipeline safety regulations to require rupture mitigation valves (RMVs), or alternative equivalent technologies, to newly constructed or entirely replaced onshore gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines with diameters of 6 inches or greater.[12] The rule did not, however, require operators to retrofit older pipes because of the non-application clause found at 49 U.S.C. § 60104(b), which prohibits PHMSA from applying certain regulations to existing facilities. Because of this, PHMSA fell short of fully implementing the NTSB's recommendations made after the San Bruno tragedy.[13] In 2024, PHMSA proposed an information collection effort regarding valves and shutoff times that could inform future rulemakings and NTSB recommendations, but that proposed effort appears to have stalled.

Excluding certain pipelines from implementation of critical safety technology based on age is dangerous. Older pipes are likely more prone to failure, and it is arbitrary to require critical safety technology on some but not all pipelines. Requiring operators to retrofit older pipelines with RMVs in High Consequence Areas (HCAs) would protect areas with more people and buildings that could be affected by a failure. Because of the nonapplication clause, however, Congress must draft self-executing language for PHMSA to have the authority to promulgate these regulations.

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[10] Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety Act of 2023 (PIPES Act of 2023), H.R. 6494, 118th Cong. (2023) https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6494/text?s=2&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22pipes+2024%22%7D.

[11] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator* https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm (calculating the rate of inflation from December 2020 to March 2025).

[12] *Pipeline Safety: Requirement of Valve Installation and Minimum Rupture Detection Standards*, 87 Fed. Reg. 20,940–992 (Apr. 8, 2022).

[13] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Press Release: NTSB Issues Response to PHMSA's Valve and Rupture Detection Rule*, (Apr. 1, 2022) https://www.ntsb.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/NR20220401B.aspx.

Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Safety

PHMSA regulations for CO_2 pipelines lack the detail necessary to ensure the safe operation of these pipelines. Given the Congressional incentives driving carbon capture and sequestration investment, many experts expect a large increase in the mileage of the nation's carbon dioxide pipelines. Once relatively rare and remote, these pipelines could soon be much more common and closer to people and communities. The Denbury CO_2 pipeline failure in Satartia, MS demonstrated the unique safety risks that these pipelines pose. An asphyxiant that is heavier than air, CO_2 can move as a plume in a dangerous and even lethal concentration close to the ground for long distances after a pipeline failure. Current PHMSA safety regulations are inappropriate and insufficient, as described in a Pipeline Safety Trust report.[14]

In early 2025, PHMSA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for CO_2 pipelines. PST supported the NPRM, as it contained provisions that would have drastically improved CO_2 pipeline safety but believed there was still room for improvement. Unfortunately, on January 23, 2025, the NPRM was withdrawn as part of the Trump administration's "Regulatory Freeze Pending Review" Executive Order.[15]

Congress should require PHMSA to re-issue its notice of proposed rulemaking on CO_2 pipelines, accept public comment, and finalize the rule within the next eighteen months.

Hydrogen Blending Pipeline Safety

Hydrogen has been highly incentivized in recent legislation such as the Production Tax Credit in the Inflation Reduction Act. Gas distribution operators are considering blending hydrogen into existing gas distribution infrastructure and the trade group the American Gas Association includes hydrogen blends of 20% as a key component of its Net Zero plan for the industry[16]. However, hydrogen transportation by pipeline poses many safety risks and key knowledge gaps remain. The risks run highest when the pipelines are near people. At least one operator has blended hydrogen, however that system in Hawai'i is unique enough that it cannot serve as a model for the rest of the country.

Hydrogen has a much higher flammability range than methane and is known to embrittle certain types of steel and plastic pipelines. A report on blending hydrogen commissioned by the California Public Utility Commission from University of California Riverside found an alarming number of safety risks and knowledge gaps.[17] A report by Accufacts commissioned by the

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[14] Richard B. Kuprewicz, *Accufacts' Perspectives on the State of Federal Carbon Dioxide Transmission Pipeline Safety Regulations as it Relates to Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration within the U.S.* (Mar. 23, 2022) *available at* https://pstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3-23-22-Final-Accufacts-CO2-Pipeline-Report2.pdf.
[15] Exec. Order, *Regulatory Freeze Pending Review* (Jan. 20, 2025) https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/regulatory-freeze-pending-review/.
[16] American Gas Association, *Net-Zero Emissions Opportunities for Gas Utilities* 61 (2021) https://www.aga.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/aga-net-zero-emissions-opportunities-for-gas-utilities.pdf
[17] Cal. Public Utilities Commission, *Hydrogen Blending Impacts Study* (July 18, 2022) https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M493/K760/493760600.PDF.

Pipeline Safety Trust stated that the weakest safety link for hydrogen blends in the distribution system were the pipes inside residences.[18]

In the same proposed information collection effort described under the valve section, PHMSA also proposed requiring operators to report blended hydrogen in their natural gas systems. Astonishingly, as it currently stands, if hydrogen remains under 50% of the gas mix in the pipeline, operators do not need to report that fact. Again, the proposed information collection effort appears to have stalled.

Congress should not allow hydrogen blends into gas distribution systems until the National Academy of Sciences has issued a report on the safety risks and knowledge gaps and PHMSA has updated its regulations.

In-Home Methane Detectors

Although pipeline operators may discover or be alerted to leaks through various activities, such as maintenance or odor complaints, these strategies will not consistently locate all hazardous leaks. When natural gas migrates through the soil into a home, the odorant may be stripped from the gas, and the resident would not be aware of the need to evacuate and alert the pipeline operator. In-home methane detectors are one method of continuous monitoring that can help the public and pipeline operators identify leaks and improve public safety. 2023 and 2024 was the deadliest two-year period for pipelines in over a decade,[19] with much of those fatalities from building explosions that could have benefited from in-home methane detection.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended the use of in-home methane detectors,[20] sometimes also referred to as natural gas detectors, to alert the public of dangerous gas leaks and prevent home explosions. Methane detectors are like smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in that they are easy to install and relatively inexpensive. Where they differ is that they can detect a gas leak well before it ignites, preventing a potentially catastrophic explosion. Multiple NTSB investigations of home explosions have determined that the presence of an in-home methane detector could have helped mitigate the consequences.

Congress should mandate the installation of in-home methane detectors in all residential and commercial occupancies receiving gas service.

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[18] Richard B. Kuprewicz, *Report: Safety of Hydrogen Transportation by Gas Pipelines* (Nov. 28, 2022) https://pstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/11-28-22-Final-Accufacts-Hydrogen-Pipeline-Report.pdf.
[19] U.S. Dept. of Transp., Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin., *Serious Incidents 20 Year Trends* https://portal.phmsa.dot.gov/analytics/saw.dll?Portalpages&PortalPath=%2Fshared%2FPDM%20Public%20Website%2F_portal%2FSC%20Incident%20Trend&Page=Serious.
[20] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Improve Pipeline Leak Detection and Mitigation* (Dec. 22, 2022) https://www.ntsb.gov/Advocacy/mwl/Pages/mwl-21-22/mwl-rph-01.aspx.

Fire Shutoff Valves

In the event of a fire in a structure that has natural gas service, gas distribution piping is often compromised and serves as fuel. This adds literal fuel to the fire and puts occupants and first responders at increased risk of injury and death. According to PHMSA, for this reason, it is necessary to quickly shut off the flow of gas to the structure.

It may take considerable time to complete the shutoff of gas, including notification of first responders and the gas company, arrival of first responders and gas company at the scene, determining the appropriate method to shut off the gas, executing shut off, and release of the gas in the pipe between the shutoff location and the structure. Reviews of accident reports have shown that it is not unusual for this to take hours, prolonging the emergency. Use of automated shutoff valves can significantly reduce the time to shut off gas to the structure. One such device is a fire shutoff valve (FSV), also known as a thermally activated shutoff valve.

A typical FSV uses a spring-loaded plug held in place by a fusible link made of a low melting point alloy. When the fire shutoff valve is exposed to fire, the link melts and the spring closes the valve, shutting off the gas. FSVs are typically installed in the service line either before the regulator, before the meter, or after the meter.

FSVs are commercially available and have been used in gas service lines before the gas meter and in gas supplies to appliances. Currently, there are no federal regulations requiring their use in natural gas distribution systems. They are required in Massachusetts[21] and have been used in Germany since the 1990s. The Pipeline Safety Trust supports the widespread use of these safety devices and advocates for federal regulations that would make their use mandatory.

Congress should require PHMSA to amend subpart H of 49 C.F.R. Part 192 to require operators to install fire shutoff valves on all gas distribution service lines. Alternatively, Congress could require PHMSA to amend 49 C.F.R. § 192.1007(b) to identify fires as a threat to meters in the distribution system.

Financially Meaningful Enforcement

With few exceptions, civil penalties are not financially meaningful to operators. When we try to chart penalties levied on operators because of fatal pipeline failures against their quarterly earnings, we often can't even visualize the penalty since it's such a tiny percentage of earnings. Giving PHMSA more enforcement authority is critical to improving pipeline safety.

[21] General Laws of Massachusetts Part 1, Title XXII, Chapter 164, Section 75 A.

Pipeline Safety Management Systems

Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS) have been developed over the last ten years. Lessons have been incorporated and updated. When implemented properly it leads to better safety outcomes. However widespread adoption still eludes the pipeline industry.

PHMSA recently released its required report to Congress on the progress of the gas distribution pipeline industry towards adoption of PSMS. While progress has been made on total mileage of pipelines that are under control of an operator that has made a commitment to PSMS, only about half of the distribution operators have made that commitment. PHMSA also recently released an Advisory Bulletin encouraging the voluntary adoption of PSMS by the pipeline industry.

Congress could make a meaningful difference in pipeline safety by directing PHMSA to take steps towards widespread industry adoption beyond voluntary efforts.

Conclusion

As you discuss how to move forward on authorizing PHMSA's pipeline safety program and make improvements to the law, I implore you to think of the empty seats at dinner tables across the country because of pipeline failures. I've been with families who have lost their loved ones recently and some who lost their loved ones 25 years ago. I can tell you: the pain never goes away. Please give PHMSA the authority and the resources it needs to meet its responsibility to the American people.

Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much for your opening statement.

And Mr. Moriarty, you are recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF JIM MORIARTY

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and members of the subcommittee. I am Jim Moriarty, executive vice president and general counsel of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

We are a diversified energy delivery company headquartered in Delaware, with service offerings that include natural gas gathering, transmission, and distribution, as well as propane, mobile compressed natural gas services, and electricity generation and distribution. Our company has operated for more than 160 years and today owns and operates assets in 9 States, serving over 440,000 customers with over 1,200 dedicated employees.

Natural gas infrastructure plays an integral role in the national security and economic sovereignty of our country, and the demand for this domestic resource will only increase in the coming years. As a key part of this Nation's pipeline infrastructure, our subsidiaries distribute natural gas to more than 330,000 customers through over 9,000 miles of pipeline. We also operate over 700 miles of transmission pipelines, a liquefied natural gas storage facility, and a renewable gas transportation fleet.

Across the country, varying local and State mandates have created a complex and patchwork regulatory landscape that complicates planning, increases cost, and ultimately affects consumer choice and pipeline safety. A unified Federal approach modeled after laws already enacted in 27 States that protect the customer's right to choose natural gas as their primary energy source would provide clarity, prevent regulatory fragmentation, and ensure that safe, reliable, and affordable domestic energy remains accessible to all Americans.

Natural gas utility distribution pipelines are the final critical link in the delivery chain as we engage daily with American families, communities, and businesses, as well as State authorities who oversee pipeline safety today. We strive to make life better for the communities in which we live and serve. Accordingly, pipeline safety is and must be our number-one priority. For these reasons we are focused on continually enhancing our culture of operational safety and risk mitigation.

Every year our company, like many others, invests in our pipeline systems, spending hundreds of millions of dollars to enhance safety, reliability, and accessibility. For example, our distribution system has been modernized by eliminating cast-iron and bare steel. Across our service areas we are performing advanced leak detection and incorporating a variety of new and innovative technologies to consistently prevent safety incidents.

Chesapeake Utilities and other natural gas distribution companies support the following principles in the upcoming pipeline safety reauthorization legislation.

First, streamline processes to meet energy demands on schedule by ensuring policies reflect the growing need for natural gas and the critical role that pipeline infrastructure plays.

Two, limit safety incidents, property damage, and environmental impacts caused by unintended excavation damages.

Three, strengthen criminal penalties on those who sabotage or intentionally damage pipeline facilities.

Four, identify emerging technologies that improve safety.

Five, study safe operations for natural gas and hydrogen blending and distribution systems.

And six, establish a 5-year reauthorization period so that PHMSA and the industry have sufficient time to complete and assess improvements.

Our industry has proved we can expand natural gas delivery while also improving safety. Doing so enables us to continue to meet the needs of our customers and the communities that we proudly serve by delivering safe, affordable, and reliable domestic energy so that no one is left behind.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moriarty follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE HEARING RECORD

Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy.

Subcommittee on Energy United States House of Representatives

July 22, 2025

Witness: Jim Moriarty

On behalf of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation ("Chesapeake Utilities" or the "Company"), I am pleased to provide background and context for the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy (Representative Rob Latta, Chairman) hearing on *"Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy."* Chesapeake Utilities and the many natural gas local distribution companies ("LDCs") across the nation share the same goals as safety advocates, the public, pipeline sector industry partners and Congress: ensuring America's pipeline system remains the safest, most secure and most reliable in the world. We look forward to working with the Committee in the 119th Congress to help secure pipeline safety reauthorization through the legislative process and into law.

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation is a diversified energy delivery company headquartered in Dover, Delaware, that offers energy solutions through natural gas gathering, transmission and distribution, electricity generation and distribution, mobile compressed natural gas utility services, propane distribution, and related energy solutions through its many divisions and subsidiaries. Operating for more than 160 years, today the Company owns and operates facilities in Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Virginia, serving over 440,000 customers and with over 1,200 employees. Our natural gas distribution companies facilitate the service of natural gas to more than 333,000 customers through nearly 9,300 miles of

pipeline infrastructure. We also own and operate over 700 miles of transmission lines, virtual pipelines, renewable natural gas shipping and liquified natural gas (“LNG”) storage.

Chesapeake Utilities is one of more than 1,650 local energy companies that deliver natural gas throughout the United States. Today, natural gas meets more than one-third of the energy needs of the U.S. As such, natural gas pipeline and distribution are an essential part of the backbone of the nation’s infrastructure for the delivery of energy. Indeed, natural gas is safely delivered to customers through approximately 2.7 million miles of underground pipelines, including 2.3 million miles of local utility distribution pipelines, 100,000 miles of gathering lines and 300,000 miles of transmission pipelines, all providing service to more than 189 million Americans.

Distribution pipelines are operated by natural gas local distribution companies, or LDCs. Natural gas utility distribution pipes are the final, critical link in the natural gas delivery chain that brings natural gas from the wellhead to the burner tip. LDCs, like Chesapeake Utilities, could be considered the face of the natural gas industry, anchored in the communities they serve, and interacting daily with customers and the state regulators who oversee pipeline safety locally. The natural gas distribution industry takes very seriously the responsibility of delivering affordable natural gas to our families, neighbors and business partners as safely, reliably and responsibly as possible. The industry is committed to providing life-sustaining energy to thousands of communities in our country, every second of every day of every year.

To ensure consumers have access to critical energy services like natural gas, more than 27 states, including Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, Iowa, North Dakota and Ohio, have passed legislation to protect consumers’ right to choose their source of energy and to ensure they can continue to choose natural gas. These forward-looking policies are the foundation for a more resilient and accessible energy system that supports families, small businesses, and industry. In Florida, for example, the preemption statutes that ensure statewide

consistency in protecting natural gas choice have empowered the natural gas industry to invest in infrastructure with confidence and prioritize long-term safety and reliability. Stable regulatory environments align with a state's future energy needs, economic development and employment growth.

Energy policy challenges, however, are not confined to one region. Across the country, varying local mandates on fuel sources and appliance standards have created a complex regulatory landscape. This patchwork of rules complicates planning, creates delays and increases costs, which ultimately affects customers and communities relying on natural gas. A unified federal approach to energy policy would provide clarity and consistency; prevent regulatory fragmentation while promoting consumer choice, safety and infrastructure investment; and ensure that safe, reliable and affordable domestic energy remains accessible to American families and businesses.

Our Number One Priority: Pipeline Safety

The domestic shale revolution has resulted in an abundant supply of natural gas. This robust supply has translated into stable natural gas prices and an increasing number of utility customers who choose to use and rely on this resource for residential and commercial applications like cooking, space heating, water heating and manufacturing. Last year alone, natural gas utilities added 730,000 customers and 20,700 miles of pipeline to serve these new customers. Chesapeake Utilities invested $356 million of capital throughout 2024, with approximately 90% of that spent on regulated transmission and distribution systems, and upgraded technology. In our Delmarva Peninsula operations, Chesapeake Utilities experienced strong growth in 2024 — adding 4,480 new customers, delivering an additional 430,000 Dth of natural gas above 2023 levels and expanding our transportation infrastructure by 65 miles to serve industrial growth. In our Florida operations, above-average customer growth and demand for natural gas enabled us to expand distribution and add 6,700 new customers throughout 2024, including 227 commercial and industrial customers, and initiate 12 infrastructure projects to deliver energy to new residential

communities across the state.

Alongside this increasing demand for affordable, resilient and domestic energy stands the commitment to operate safe and reliable pipeline infrastructure to support dependable natural gas delivery to homes, businesses and essential facilities like hospitals. Safety is always at the forefront of who we are and what we do. At Chesapeake Utilities, we have been particularly focused on enhancing a culture of operational safety and risk mitigation, and on implementing systems that collect, assess and promptly address safety concerns.

Chesapeake Utilities has a 24/7 control center that operates and monitors critical natural gas infrastructure across all of the Company's entities. This facility, along with the applicable field devices, sits on a dedicated SCADA network that is segmented from the IT network with a DMZ between both environments. We implement a high level of cyber security best practices in order to protect the integrity of the SCADA network and ensure the utmost safety of the communities in which we operate.

At the start of 2024, we implemented a safety data management system, which includes incident reporting workflow and near-miss reporting capabilities. This system combines monthly educational programming with interactive safety challenges designed to improve all teammates' understanding of, and focus on, personal and operational safety. In 2024 alone, we performed 349 third-party excavator trainings; 14,193 monthly safety meeting attendance hours; 662 locate audits; 1,467 on-site excavation visits; 1,146 hours on standby; and 2,268 hours patrolling pipelines.

Every year the natural gas utility industry invests $33 billion on the safety of pipeline systems. Chesapeake Utilities alone will invest upwards of $460 million over 10 years modernizing our gas systems to enhance safety and reliability. Our two Florida natural gas distribution subsidiaries are actively implementing infrastructure improvement programs to enhance safety, reliability,

accessibility and environmental performance by replacing leak-prone pipes. Overall, our distribution system has been modernized, and we plan to completely eliminate cast iron and bare steel pipe from our distribution system by the end of 2026. Across our company's gathering system in Ohio, we conduct consistent leak detection through pipeline inspections utilizing hand held devices for advanced multi-gas detection, remote monitoring, and methane-specific sensors. From 2020 to 2024, leak detection controls and our commitment to operational excellence have led to 52,000 feet of pipeline replacements throughout our gathering pipeline system.

Unquestionably, pipeline safety is our industry's number one priority, and through critical partnerships with state and federal regulators, elected representatives and other stakeholders, Chesapeake Utilities and other natural gas LDCs are continually working to enhance pipeline safety, integrity and system resiliency.

Pipeline Safety Reauthorization Priorities

Chesapeake Utilities supports fact-based, reasonable, flexible and practicable enhancements to pipeline safety regulations. We look forward to continuously improving the regulatory structure to build upon lessons learned and reflect ongoing improvements to pipeline safety and related programs and technology. In that spirit, I would like to highlight a few of our Company's priorities as the reauthorization process moves forward.

Streamline processes to ensure regional energy demands are met in a timely manner.

Navigating a complex mix of federal, state and local regulations can hinder or limit the delivery of energy and pipeline infrastructure expansion. Delays and costs associated with complex regulations that arise from a non-uniform, patchwork approach severely hinder the industry's ability to meet the growing needs of critical infrastructure sectors. Streamlined regulatory processes, timely Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PSHMA) application approvals and efficient permitting of pipeline infrastructure, are essential to expanding natural gas distribution and meeting the growing energy demand nationwide. Across our service territories, we are seeing

a rising demand and critical need for expanded natural gas pipeline infrastructure to support residential growth, enhance grid security, alleviate pipeline capacity constraints, support the AI revolution and data center growth and advance space exploration. Natural gas infrastructure plays an integral role in the national security and economic sovereignty of our country, and the demand for this domestic resource will only increase in the coming years.

Chesapeake Utilities is actively working to construct new pipeline infrastructure to transport energy to meet these growing residential, commercial, industrial and power demands, as well as serving new market growth and customer demands for LNG. Chesapeake Utilities is constructing an LNG storage facility in southern Maryland to provide critical natural gas service to customers during the peak winter heating season. To meet the growing energy demand of data centers, our Ohio subsidiary, Aspire Energy Express, LLC, has entered into an agreement to construct and operate a new intrastate pipeline in central Ohio to support on-site electric power generation at a new fuel cell facility serving a data center. As a natural gas provider for Florida's Space Coast, we see firsthand how natural gas is now playing a critical role in space exploration servicing commercial space, Space Force and NASA's operations and launches. With the vital role natural gas has today, it is critically important that the upcoming PHMSA reauthorization reflects the growing need for natural gas and the crucial role natural gas pipeline infrastructure plays in our strong economy and national security.

Support Limiting Pipeline Excavation Damage Incidents. Across the natural gas utility industry, excavation damage is the primary cause of distribution pipeline incidents. From 2020 to 2024, Chesapeake Utilities alone experienced 2,942 damage incidents from excavation activity. Approximately 53.4% of these damages were due to the excavator not calling the 811 One Call program. Another 13.9% of damages were due to excavators failing to maintain clearance after verifying marks, and 11.9% were caused by excavators digging prior to verifying marks. According to PHMSA data, in the past 20 years, excavation damage incidents on natural gas pipelines have resulted in 57 deaths, 254 injuries and over $300 million in property damage. These serious

incidents are preventable. States that have strong excavation damage prevention and enforcement programs typically experience lower rates of damage to pipelines. Congress should urge states to strengthen excavation damage prevention and enforcement programs. Our Company, along with the American Gas Association ("AGA"), supports One Call programs that work to prevent excavation damage to underground facilities. Our Company and our industry are confident such programs will reduce damage and save lives.

Support Pipeline Technology Alternatives. Modern pipeline safety technologies, many of which were not envisioned when current pipeline safety regulations were first implemented, have the potential to meet the intent of existing regulations while improving the overall safety of natural gas, hazardous liquid, underground storage and LNG infrastructure. For example, advanced pipeline leak detection technologies can be used to comply with leak detection regulations and should be recognized in codes and PSHMA-led processes. Chesapeake Utilities has implemented advanced leak detection across our service territories, including piloting new technologies that have deployed satellite technology for methane detection and finding leaks and monitoring devices at two above-ground facilities in Ohio and Delaware. Additionally, we are also integrating two new advanced mobile leak detection ("AMLD") vehicles across our service territories. We anticipate this AMLD technology to further support our emission reduction efforts by pinpointing leak emission sources in minutes. One of our Florida subsidiaries, Florida City Gas ("FCG"), has also harnessed the power of cutting-edge software platforms that use artificial intelligence and machine learning to help prevent damage to assets, enhance safety and reduce operation risks. The platforms yielded more than a 30% reduction in damages for FCG operations and are being evaluated for use Companywide. We are committed to seeking innovative ways to identify leaks and our industry supports a PHMSA-led process to identify technology alternatives that, if utilized, will meet the intent of existing pipeline safety regulations while providing an equal or greater level of pipeline safety.

Strengthen Criminal Penalties for Intentional Damage to Pipelines. Chesapeake Utilities

supports strengthening criminal penalties for intentionally damaging pipeline infrastructure. Natural gas utilities across the nation are experiencing an increase in criminal attacks on their property, equipment and facilities. These activities range from gunshots targeting pipelines to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) placed on natural gas delivery equipment, and the damaging of facilities and equipment necessary for safe natural gas delivery. These activities not only are hazardous to the safety and property of the public and LDC employees, but they also threaten an LDC's ability to deliver natural gas to thousands of homes, hospitals, schools, government and military facilities and other critical infrastructure and human needs customers. We support increased criminal penalties on bad actors who intentionally damage, destroy or impair pipelines and pipeline facilities, including those under construction.

Hydrogen-Natural Gas Blending R&D Study. Hydrogen is emerging as a solution for achieving natural gas LDC energy storage and decarbonization goals. Natural gas projects in North America and worldwide demonstrate successful blending of hydrogen into the existing natural gas distribution network or utilizing natural gas that has a naturally occurring higher hydrogen content. At Chesapeake Utilities, we have successfully utilized a natural gas-hydrogen blend of 5% co-firing on our combined heat and power unit, demonstrating hydrogen is a viable option for our industrial gas users. Other natural gas utilities, such as Hawaii Gas, have used hydrogen blending of 15% for decades, and many systems overseas are operating at approximately a 20% blend. It is important to understand how companies operating natural gas distribution systems with a higher hydrogen content are using these systems safely.

We are also an active participant in the MACH2 mid-Atlantic hydrogen hub where our role involves promoting safety and workforce development through awareness, training and education at our state-of-the-art Safety Town facility in Dover, Delaware. Chesapeake Utilities continues to engage and partner with higher education institutions in multiple service territories to advance hydrogen R&D initiatives, including utilizing our Safety Town facilities to test hydrogen on Company assets, such as pipes, meters and valves, to develop a greater understanding and plan for expansion of

hydrogen use. As such, we recommend the Government Accountability Office ("GAO") conduct a review of natural gas distribution systems worldwide that utilize hydrogen-natural gas blending applications or utilize gas with a naturally occurring higher hydrogen content, to identify processes, materials and standards the operators have implemented to operate safely. The results of this study will help ensure and advance the safety of ongoing domestic hydrogen R&D and blending operations.

5-Year Reauthorization for PHMSA's Pipeline Safety Program. PHMSA's Pipeline Safety program was reauthorized most recently under the PIPES Act of 2016 and PIPES Act of 2020. As PHMSA's Pipeline Safety program expired again in 2023, the frequency of reauthorization has been reduced to just three years. This interval is inadequate given the significant time it takes to conduct studies, publish reports, move reauthorization priorities from legislation to Proposed Rulemaking, address comments and develop feasible, reasonable, cost effective, and practical rulemaking (incorporating stakeholder input). Accordingly, and in keeping with reauthorization intervals that preceded the PIPES Act of 2016 (1996, 2002, 2006, 2011), Congress should reauthorize PHMSA's Pipeline Safety program for not less than five years. A reauthorization interval of at least five years also would align with other legislative reauthorizations such as the Farm Bill and Surface Transportation reauthorizations and allow regulations to be implemented and evaluated for effectiveness and provide industry certainty, before new provisions are proposed or enacted.

Conclusion

America's natural gas utilities' commitment to pipeline safety relies on sound engineering principles and best-in-class technology, a trained professional workforce, effective community relationships and a strong partnership with state pipeline safety authorities and PHMSA. Chesapeake Utilities Corporation continues to prioritize safety while investing in and advancing our infrastructure's reliability and energy conservation programs to serve our natural gas distribution customers. We

remain focused on providing safe, reliable and affordable domestic natural gas service while keeping our customers, communities and employees safe.

As pipeline safety reauthorization legislation is drafted this year, Chesapeake Utilities and our partners, including the American Gas Association and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America ("INGAA"), encourage Congress to work in a bipartisan fashion to advance reasonable and consensus changes to pipeline safety law and regulation, support PHMSA's primary role as pipeline safety regulator and recognize the great strides in pipeline safety engineering and operating practices that pipeline companies are putting into practice across the country. We remain focused on delivering excellence for all stakeholders in a manner that will continue to meet the needs of our customers and the communities we proudly serve by delivering safe, affordable and reliable domestic energy, so that no one is left behind. We stand ready to assist in this process with real world operations, engineering and safety data and experience. We welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource on this important effort.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much for your opening statement, and that will conclude our opening statements from our witnesses. And again, I want to thank you all for being with us today. And at this time I will recognize myself for 5 minutes to our—questions to our witnesses.

Ms. Miller, do you believe that PHMSA's primary mission as a regulator should be safety?

Ms. MILLER. I do.

Mr. LATTA. And would you explain why pipelines have a net positive effect on the environment?

Ms. MILLER. Well, as you've heard from other witnesses—and first I should say thank you, Chairman, for the question—but as you have heard from other witnesses as well, pipelines are the cleanest and safest way to move energy. The demand for affordable, reliable, and safe, sustainable energy sources is growing, and natural gas is abundant in the United States. So with appropriate regulatory policy, natural gas can—and the pipelines that the midstream operators design, install, and operate can be the way that safe, affordable, reliable energy is delivered to the communities that need it.

I would note that the U.S. Energy Information Administration has reported that natural gas results in fewer emissions for—than using coal or petroleum products to deliver the same energy. Therefore, when you use natural gas through pipelines in place of coal or other petroleum products, you are actually enabling communities worldwide to have reliable, affordable energy sources to enable a higher-quality standard of living safely.

And our members—on top of all that, our members are prioritizing safety, and they are looking for ways to ensure that their pipelines do not have leaks, lost or emitted gas—lost gas is actually lost profit, lost value for our members, so they are not only incentivized to ensure that natural gas pipelines are operated safely, but they also deliver an environmental benefit because it is the right thing to do, but also because they are financially incentivized to ensure that that product stays in the pipe.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you.

Mr. Moriarty, 40 percent of electric generation in the United States comes from natural gas. Electricity demand in the United States is projected to increase more than 25 percent in the next 5 years, in part because of the race for AI and the offshoring of manufacturing. That means we are going to need more natural gas, which will require significant infrastructure build-out, including the expansion of pipeline infrastructure. Could you elaborate on how pipeline constraints impact and ultimately jeopardize safety?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

States that allow prompt regulatory recovery of the costs for the replacement and relocation of pipelines will accelerate the upgrading of aging infrastructure. We have these regulatory mechanisms in Florida and in Maryland and Delaware.

Also, excavation damage is the primary source of distribution pipeline incidents, and hampers operations and efforts to upgrade aging infrastructure. States that have strong excavation damage prevention programs and enforcement typically experienced lower rates of damage to distribution pipelines.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you.

Mr. Black, the PIPES Act of 2020 recognized the value of using new technologies to bolster both efficiency and safety. However, DOE's implementation of the program had many nonstatutory requirements that ultimately deterred participation. Would you elaborate on what some of those nonstatutory hurdles were and are?

Mr. BLACK. Thank you for your leadership on this issue in the 2020 PIPES Act and in last Congress' bill, and we hope that we can continue to work on this issue.

The technology demonstration pilot program gives us an opportunity to demonstrate how new technologies can improve pipeline safety. PHMSA went beyond the safeguards that Congress suggested and required technology pilot program applicants to use a special permit process and to put those before a NEPA review, none of which had ever been done for similar types of applications like that, so nobody used it.

Mr. LATTA. Could you—just pardon for the interruption. Why would they do that if they had never done it before?

Mr. BLACK. It confounded us. I don't know.

Mr. LATTA. But, you know, there is another kind of a theme that went through. Why aren't we prosecuting these cases? Because obviously, we need to hire penalties for, you know, attacks on pipelines. What is happening out there?

If I could maybe just—I got 36 seconds left, but are we not prosecuting? Or what is happening in these cases out there?

Mr. BLACK. Well, there are criminal penalties in Federal pipeline safety law for damaging or destroying pipelines, but we have incidents that don't lead to immedi]ate damage or discovery that fall under loopholes. So we think you need to address issues like valve turning that can cause pressure buildups, or torching pipelines, or shooting high-powered rifles through pipelines, all of which have happened. We would like to work with you to close those loopholes and deter attacks against pipelines.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much. And my time has expired, and I now recognize the gentlelady from Florida, the ranking member of the subcommittee, for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Caram, you highlight the erosion of the commitment to pipeline safety in your—throughout your testimony, and that includes the professional workforce at PHMSA. Is that right?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, we have heard of retirements at PHMSA.

Ms. CASTOR. And that—I understand that the Community Liaison department, which engages members of the public, has gone from 13 employees to just 3 people who are now responsible for engaging the entire country. Can you explain to us what the real-world impacts of the reduction in professional expert workforce at PHMSA means for the safety of the public?

Mr. CARAM. Sure, thank you for the question.

Unfortunately, we don't know fully. We haven't heard official word out of PHMSA as exactly the extent of the retirements and the reductions in force. So we are going off of what has been reported in the media or what is available on their website, which hasn't been fully updated. But we have noticed that the Commu-

nity Liaison department went from, as you mentioned, 13 down to 3, and that includes the manager of the department, and that is 3 people in charge of, you know, public engagement with members of the public across the entire country who live among and alongside the over 3 million miles of pipeline, more miles of pipeline than paved roads, which I hope is obvious that is not nearly enough.

And we have also heard, you know, most of the leadership staff is gone. That is a lot of years of experience that has been drained out. We have also heard a lot of staff from the standards and rulemaking team is—has retired, as well.

Ms. CASTOR. I am also very concerned with the escalating costs and risk driven by the heating planet and climate change. In June the National Transportation Safety Board issued a final report on the 1-point-million-gallon pipeline oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2023, which caused $30 million in damage. In the report the NTSB specified that it was the result of land movement related to hurricane activity.

And this is fresh in my mind because I saw significant damage to energy infrastructure following Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the Tampa Bay area.

Does PHMSA currently have any regulations or guidelines, Mr. Caram, for pipeline safety related to extreme weather events, flooding, and more intense hurricanes?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you for that question. So we call all of those geohazards, these geologic threats to pipeline integrity, and they can be a result of extreme weather events. And in addition to hurricanes we have seen pipeline failures after large rainfall, you know, of historic levels and things like that.

There is nothing specific in PHMSA regulations——

Ms. CASTOR. Well, what can——

Mr. CARAM [continuing]. About geohazards.

Ms. CASTOR. What can Congress do if we are going to update regulations to better incorporate climate resilience practices?

Mr. CARAM. Mandate that PHMSA adopt geohazard-specific regulations. There is industry guidance out there, there's best practices by operators, and a lot to go on to start writing those regulations now.

Ms. CASTOR. There are also a few elephants in the room right now when it comes to pipeline safety, and one of them is the hatchet that the administration is taking to just basic funding of pipeline safety and PHMSA. Round this, your testimony, out. What are—what can we anticipate at PHMSA in regard to the safety of the public if these kind of draconian cuts, the work of professional experts and then their overall budget, is enacted into law?

Mr. CARAM. Well, PHMSA is already an underresourced, understaffed agency before this. And it was—it is really an all-hands-on-deck, committed to safety, so it is really hard to imagine cuts not impacting their ability to be an effective safety regulator.

These—the types of results that we would expect to see from these cuts and lower of—and lowering of enforcement and regulatory activity are—I would imagine will be long term. I don't think you will see an overnight change. But if we were to see a change, unfortunately, I think it is long term, and we will be seeing it——

Ms. CASTOR. In the statistics that you highlighted early to say, well, maybe—we really haven't seen a significant improvement in reduction in deaths and injuries.

Is that likely to continue if we are not able to properly fund and support pipeline safety across America?

Mr. CARAM. I hope that is not the case, but I do believe that a strong, effective regulator is what keeps pipelines—is part of what keeps pipelines safe. And lacking that, I worry about the results.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The gentlelady's time has expired, and the Chair now recognizes the chairman of the full committee for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thanks, Mr. Chair, and sorry for popping up and down. We have another hearing going on downstairs.

So, Mr. Black, I will first ask you this: How does PHMSA enforcement act as a deterrent to unsafe operations?

Mr. BLACK. We are glad that this PHMSA has said that its top enforcement priority is pipeline safety, not other topics. And our country needs confidence in our pipeline network and in our pipeline safety oversight.

Enforcement acts as a deterrent against unsafe operations, and so pipeline operators are expecting that PHMSA is enforcing pipeline safety rules for the betterment of safety.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, because we need confidence because I have had in my area I know—if you look at a map of pipelines, people would be just shocked how many pipelines we have. But whenever there is a new movement forward, there is always a big public relations campaign against the pipeline about safety. So we need confidence in it so people will know.

And then when you tell people, you know, there are pipelines everywhere, and they don't realize that, but that has kind of become a new thing to keep us from moving energy around, is that people are—pipelines. And we absolutely want them to be safe and people have to confidence in that. So thanks.

So Ms. Miller, when PHMSA rulemakings go beyond the appropriate or statutory-mandated scope, how does that impact an operator's ability to prioritize safety?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you for the question, Chairman Guthrie.

Operators will comply with PHMSA's regulations. And so when PHMSA's rules regulate matters other than to achieve safety priorities, that means that resources that alternatively could have been devoted to those safety priorities are spent in other ways. And this issue is not only relevant to the operators, but it is also relevant to PHMSA resources.

We appreciate that Congress mandates PHMSA's scope of responsibility and that the 2004 authorizing statute for PHMSA made clear that safety was to be its highest priority. And we welcome, to the extent that there is any ambiguity about that priority, that Congress can reaffirm PHMSA's focus on safety.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you.

Mr. Moriarty, what are the barriers to addressing the remaining distribution lines that need to be upgraded?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you very much, Chairman Guthrie, for the question.

In our view, pipeline infrastructure is the safest means for transporting energy, and more must be built to meet the growing demand. Just one example is our Ohio subsidiary worked very closely with AEP to build—it is called Aspire Energy Express—to construct a new intrastate pipeline in central Ohio to support an onsite electric power generation at a new fuel facility center serving a data center.

We continue to work on solutions to these problems. We work closely with our elected representatives in each of our regulatory agencies to address concerns. In our view, everybody is welcome to the table to raise any issues they have. But what we are asking for is just prompt, fair, and balanced consideration, and then issuance of regulations so that we all can comply with those.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, thank you.

So, Mr. Black, how can pipeline operators use AI and other technologies like smart pigs to improve safety throughout their operations?

Mr. BLACK. We are really excited about——

Mr. GUTHRIE. The smart pigs?

Mr. BLACK. Yes, and how it can improve pipeline safety.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Explain a smart pig.

Mr. LATTA. Well, you might—your mic there.

Mr. BLACK. There we go.

Mr. LATTA. There we go.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Explain a smart pig, as well.

Mr. BLACK. A smart pig is a pipeline inspection device that travels on the inside of a pipeline, pushed by the liquid product, collecting information. It collects terabytes of data about the inside of a pipeline. So AI could use—could be used to process that information to help identify more issues before they become problems.

Similarly, pipeline operations have pumps, valves, and sensors along the long linear pipeline, and that creates operations data that AI and machine learning might help us tp find a pinhole leak that those sensors otherwise can't develop.

And so support for R&D among the pipeline industry at places like the Pipeline Research Council International is happening right now by pipelines to try and benefit from AI. And a way Congress can help is to reauthorize the Pipeline Safety Technology Demonstration Program that Chairman Latta asked me about. That will help us test those technologies and show PHMSA how it should safely improve its regulations to benefit safety.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you.

So Ms. Miller, do you also agree that this AI or technology—if you find leaks that are otherwise too small to be detected, how would that improve safety?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you. Yes, I would echo what Mr. Black just highlighted. Our members are using AI today to be able to sort through large quantities of data to be able to identify trends and solve operational challenges. We believe that AI can inform risk assessment to help operators identify and repair—I am sorry, identify and manage first pipeline anomalies before they become leaks, and then also prioritize repairs in order to address those that pose the highest risk first.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thanks.

Ms. MILLER. We would encourage——

Mr. GUTHRIE. My time is expired, he is about to gavel me down. So I want to thank you for your answer.

And I will yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from New Jersey, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Chairman Latta. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I am concerned about a number of actions the Trump administration has taken at PHMSA in its first 6 months. And one of those was calling back a leak detection rule finalized in the last days of the Biden administration.

And I want to be clear: The rule was finalized and done, but the Trump administration instructed the Federal Register not to publish the rule and has since clawed it back. So I just want to point out that some of—to some of our newer Members that this rule was required by a bipartisan law that President Trump himself signed. That law required that PHMSA put forward a final rule within a year of enactment, and 4 years after the law was signed President Trump prevented the rule from being finalized.

So Mr. Caram, could you talk about the importance of the leak detection rule? Did it have buy-in from industry and public stakeholders? Did the Trump administration's decision make us safer?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you for the question.

That rule was negotiated, discussed over 2 weeks of advisory committee meetings with multiple stakeholder groups—industry, public, and government. There were a lot of unanimous votes. Not all of the votes were unanimous, but many of them were. And I would say consensus was reached on the vast majority of the issues in leak detection and repair.

And that rule was due, as you said, a year after. That would have been in December of 2021. So it is years overdue now. So it was really disappointing to see it pulled back from being published.

Mr. PALLONE. And what about my question about did that decision by the Trump administration make us safer?

Mr. CARAM. No, no, we continue to have incidents from known leaks. There are regulations on specifically what kind of equipment operators need to use, and the regulations around grading leaks as to how quickly they need to be repaired are vague. And it—that rule would have established those standards and, I believe, made pipelines safer.

Mr. PALLONE. Well, thank you. Now I want to turn to a potential priority for a pipeline safety reauthorization bill. As you pointed out in your written testimony, PHMSA's safety rules are subject to a duplicative cost benefit analysis over and beyond the one already required for all other Federal rules. And this isn't a hypothetical problem. GPA Midstream, one of the witnesses represented here today, has used this at the DC Circuit Court to kill pipeline safety rules, and I—and to me that is unacceptable.

So Mr. Caram, would you talk about how this duplicative requirement harms public safety and whether Congress should look at removing this requirement in a reauthorization bill?

Mr. CARAM. As far as I am aware, PHMSA is the only safety agency with this statutory cost benefit requirement that is duplicative over the Executive order. It is difficult to do cost benefit on low-frequency, high-consequence failures like you see with pipelines, and it hamstrings firms from making real progress on safety.

As you have mentioned, multiple rules over the last several years have been rolled back by the courts saying that PHMSA didn't fully justify the costs with benefits, and the benefits in many of these cases are human lives.

Mr. PALLONE. Oh, thank you. I just want to, you know, mention to my Republican colleagues because we keep—they keep talking about a bipartisan bill. But if we are really going to have a bipartisan bill on this issue, it has to be solely—and I stress solely—about increasing safety.

You know, the committee Republicans' pipeline safety bill failed last Congress because it was not drafted, in my opinion, in a collaborative manner and included partisan provisions related to pipeline siting as opposed to safety. So that is—you know, it is not going to be bipartisan if it deals with siting and other issues other than safety.

So I just hope we can see a more collaborative process this year, Mr. Chairman. And with that I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you very much. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time, and the Chair now recognizes the vice chair of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Black, I am going to come back to you. I want to highlight a section of your written testimony addressing pipeline safety: "A 2018 report prepared by PHMSA analyzing 10 years of incident data found pipelines were 13 times safer than both trains and trucks, with pipelines experiencing 1 incident for every 720 million gallons, with rail incidents occurring every 50 million gallons delivered." Pipelines are the safest way to move this product. Agreed?

Mr. BLACK. Absolutely.

Mr. WEBER. Yes, and then you also talked about an Obama administration analysis found rejecting a major pipeline and shipping the same crude oil by rail would increase the risk of oil release by over 800 times and barrels released by 2.6 times. Very, very important information.

The Keystone Pipeline would have come into my district, the Gulf Coast of Texas, over by Beaumont, Texas—Port Arthur, to be exact. We know that we can move product cleanly, and nobody wants—and I think in one of the other witness' testimony there was 18 or 30-something people killed in the last year, I think, if I recall that correctly, and that is so sad. Nobody wants that. Nobody is for that. I mean, everybody wants to do everything they can to prevent that. I mean, my gosh, we had a recent, you know, weather event in Texas where over 300 people lost their lives. It is always sad.

So I would say that we want—if you looked at the traffic records of last year—and this is—by the way, this is NHTSA's information. Last year in 2024, 39,000 people lost their lives in traffic. Every-

body hates that. Nobody wants that. Everybody wants to do as safe as they can, and that goes with pipelines. Would you agree?

Mr. BLACK. Yes. Americans use liquid fuels every day. And if you cancel a pipeline, we are still going to use those fuels, they are going to move on to other modes that are less safe.

Mr. WEBER. Right, and let me go back to the Keystone Pipeline. The Keystone Pipeline coming into my district would have carried 830,000 barrels of product a day.

Mr. BLACK. Yes.

Mr. WEBER. If you do—if you divided that up into 18-wheelers, it is over 5,300 18-wheelers on the highway a day. What does that increase the chance of more and more people being killed on the highway? So nobody wants that. Obama shut down the Keystone Pipeline. Of course, President Trump got it back up and running and then Biden shut it down too.

So I am going to go back to your report. You said pipelines are down 30 percent over the last 5 years, and they remain the safest method to move product. We are always striving to improve that record. How can Congress ensure that PHMSA is equipped to modernize its regulations in step with industry innovation without imposing restrictions that could hinder progress? How do we do that?

Mr. BLACK. Well, several steps. One is to permanently reform the special permit program. As you know, there are so many different pipeline operating conditions and types of pipes. Sometimes PHMSA regulations are not one-size-fits-all for that pipe.

Second is to reauthorize without bureaucratic problems the Pipeline Safety Technology Demonstration program that we were talking.

And then to keep PHMSA focused on pipeline safety, and to fund—have everybody working on R&D to get us down to zero incidents.

Mr. WEBER. It is safe to say, isn't it, in your opinion, that nobody who works in the pipeline industry—or in the fossil fuel industry, for that matter—wants to go home from their job and find out that one of their relatives was killed on the highway? Nobody wants that. It is the same with pipeline safety. Everybody who works in the industry doesn't want anybody to be killed in that endeavor.

Ms. Miller, I am going to come to you. My district along the Gulf Coast has three LNG export facilities—a fourth across the border in Louisiana—so we understand—the understanding is that PHMSA has been working to update regulations regarding the monitoring of LNG pipelines for corrosion, aligning them more closely with the risk-based industry standard—driven standards. Some estimates suggest these updates could save facilities millions of dollars annually.

With growing investment in LNG export capacity increasing global demand for U.S. energy, how can commonsense updates help safety regulations?

Very quickly. Turn your mic on.

Ms. MILLER. Thank you for the question.

Yes, we do agree that performance-based or risk-based measures can help facilitate smarter safety regulation that actually achieves the outcomes that are desired. So we agree with you that performance-based measures facilitate safety.

Mr. WEBER. And you would agree that nobody wants nobody they know, no Americans, nobody killed on the highways and nobody killed by pipelines. You would agree with that.

Ms. MILLER. I totally agree with that.

Mr. WEBER. Yes, I—

Ms. MILLER. Safety is first.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of this time. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey's 8th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you for calling this hearing today, but I want to provide context for what is happening in Congress this week, what is happening outside the committee's doors.

The speaker has announced that we are going to have canceled votes this week. He is limiting the legislative action that can be taken on the floor. And I think most Americans would want to know why. Why would we limit the things that we can do to further the interests of our constituents? What would that issue be?

And the issue that has broken the Republican Party is their refusal to vote on the release of the Epstein files. Of all the things that we have to deal with as a country, the reason we can't do our work here is because Republicans refuse to deal with the Epstein files and the transparency that they promised the American people. The Republican Party is so broken that they refuse to hold this administration accountable or let us do our jobs to vote on legislation. But we are sitting here pretending that it is business as usual in this hearing room this morning, when we know that is not the case.

Let me also remind folks back home that just last month Republicans passed their highly partisan reconciliation package, which included provisions to bypass the Clean Water Act and erode States' rights to protect our constituents from polluting pipelines and a giveaway to fossil fuel companies. So at the same time that they are making it easier for fossil fuel companies to build pipelines in States and districts that don't want them, they are making it harder for Americans to access health care through Medicaid, through the ACA, by adding additional red tape.

So, easier for fossil fuel companies, harder for average Americans who are potentially dealing with long-term disabilities. The absolute lack of accountability is astounding.

Last year, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee put together and approved a truly bipartisan bill that would have reauthorized PHMSA pipeline safety programs for the next 4 years, giving families in all of our communities peace of mind that our pipelines are safe. Unfortunately, last year, instead of coming to the table, Energy and Commerce Republicans offered a bill that authorized significantly less than what we approved on T&I to the tune of $80 million less per year. In fact, the Republican Energy and Commerce bill would have cut activities that keep our communities safe by 18 percent from the 2020 authorization levels.

Mr. Caram, can you briefly touch on what a cut like this would mean for pipeline safety for all of our constituents?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you for that.

Inflation—since the last pipeline authorization, the PIPES Act of 2020, inflation has been over 20 percent. So an increase of anything less than 20 percent in this reauthorization would be a cut in funding. On top of that, there is new jurisdiction for PHMSA in gathering lines and the potential build-out of CO_2 and hydrogen pipelines, all of which would require more funding. So a cut below the 2020 authorization would be quite drastic.

Mr. MENENDEZ. That would make it more difficult for hiring and retaining the experts that we need to coordinate critical elements of our pipeline safety programs. Is that correct?

Mr. CARAM. That is correct.

Mr. MENENDEZ. And with the ongoing layoffs and buy-outs, we know that that is going to have an impact on pipeline safety programs. Is that correct?

Mr. CARAM. I believe so. I am looking forward to hearing more about what is happening there.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Yes, because we now have even less staff in an already understaffed agency that is responsible for keeping all of our families safe from the dangers of neglected pipelines. Republicans are proposing to cut an already underresourced agency, all while they are actively passing legislation and pushing for more pipelines. So less staff, less funding, and more work to do.

It is highly concerning to me that the Trump administration is turning a blind eye to bad behavior by fossil fuel companies while they are actively hamstringing the agency responsible for holding these companies accountable and keeping us all safe. And Republicans in Congress are enabling it by cutting resources for PHMSA and adding to their workload.

Would you say that the Republican approach to safety is making Americans less safe or more safe?

Mr. CARAM. I would say cuts to PHMSA would make Americans less safe.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Correct. And we know that the T&I has a bill that would actually make—a bipartisan bill that would provide the resources needed. But again, this committee, the Republicans on this committee, chose to go a different route and not act in a truly bipartisan way.

This is all problematic because Democrats on this committee want to deal with the challenges that we have in this country, want to do it in a thoughtful, bipartisan, bicameral way. We were able to do that on T&I, so it is not impossible. People think that we can't do these things in a bipartisan way. We absolutely can. T&I has shown us the way. This committee needs to follow T&I's lead to get those things done for the American people, to keep our constituents safe.

I hope that is the work that we can do in this Congress, but apparently we won't be able to do it because Republicans refuse to release the Epstein files.

I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time, and the Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio's 12th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here today. My first question is for Ms. Miller.

Thank you for being here. In your testimony you state that in-plant piping regulation by PHMSA is duplicative to the safety programs under the jurisdiction of OSHA. Can you elaborate on the requirements in-plant pipes must comply with under OSHA's process safety management standards?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you for the question.

I appreciate—we do appreciate this committee's consideration of the opportunity to bring legislative certainty to eliminating the duplication. So OSHA's pipeline safety management system does have requirements that include, for example, making sure that we have written operation—written operating procedures for covered processes, for maintaining integrity, for managing change.

We would note that PHMSA itself has acknowledged that the OSHA safety management imposed on gas in-plant piping is of a similar quality to what PHMSA itself would be requiring, and the duplication of that effort brings—it is cumbersome, it brings not only duplicated demand for resources, but there can be inconsistencies.

I would highlight, for example, one of the things is that we have inspectors from each of the agencies who are reviewing our operations. And when they do so, they come with different experience, different subject matter expertise. So the OSHA inspectors have familiarity with inspecting in-plants, for example, in refineries. The PHMSA inspectors have more experience inspecting interstate transmission lines, for example, and so that the opportunity to have—engage with a regulator who has more experience with in-plant piping brings more consistency and efficient use of resources that can be applied to other safety matters.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you. Can you discuss the challenges your members have in ensuring safe operations when two different Federal regulators are overseeing the same piping?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you. I would repeat, then, that it is the complication of having two potentially inconsistent sets of requirements, standing up two programs to be able to achieve similar safety-desired outcomes but through different means with different types of inspections, different requirements, which is just a drain on resources and can be inconsistent or contradictory.

Mr. BALDERSON. Would you say this conflict and regulatory overlap like in the case of in-plant pipes make it more confusing and challenging to maintain safe operations for GPA Midstream members?

Ms. MILLER. I would.

Mr. BALDERSON. You also wrote in your testimony that PHMSA is rightfully taking action with the recent notice of proposed rulemaking——

Tough position here, I can't see.

Proposed rulemaking to alleviate this regulatory uncertainty regarding in-plant gas piping. Would you agree that, while the agency's proposal is welcome and necessary, Congress can and should still act to remedy this issue with a statutory fix to provide certainty for industry now and into the future?

Ms. MILLER. Absolutely, yes. The notice of proposed rulemaking from PHMSA is a great start, but we would appreciate Congress

making that permanent. Our members appreciate legislative predictability and certainty so they can plan for long-term operations.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you, Ms. Miller.

Mr. Black—and I want to be—I have a minute and 23—follow up with you. Last Congress this committee passed a strong pipeline safety reauthorization that strengthened penalties on individuals that damage, destroy, or impair the operation of pipeline facilities. I have heard from a number of pipeline workers and operators in my district who have strong concerns about worker safety due to an increase in attacks and vandalism on pipelines over the last several years.

Mr. Black, can you discuss why it is so important for Congress to choose loopholes and strengthen penalties on individuals that attack pipelines?

And a followup: Would doing so help protect the safety and security of your members, employees, and pipeline workers?

Mr. BLACK. Actions that tamper with the pipeline risk hurting of the people who live nearby, the perpetrators themselves, and the environment. We have seen people cutting through chains to turn valves, shooting pipeline components before they are installed, and shooting a high—you know, using a blowtorch on pipelines.

There is—Congress said no—criminal penalties in pipeline safety law for damaging and destroying, but there is a loophole. If you tamper with a pipeline but you don't immediately damage or destroy it, it is not covered by the Federal pipeline safety laws. If you cover that, if you take that action to close that loophole, you will protect the environment and the workforce around those, and we would encourage you to do that in your reauthorization.

Mr. BALDERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Virginia's 4th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Thank you, Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor, for holding this very important hearing.

In recent years we have seen several pipeline incidents in Virginia that underscore the importance of the pipeline safety program. Communities across the Commonwealth have long raised concerns about the Mountain Valley Pipeline, from construction activities contaminating drinking water to the risk of corroded pipes failing. These fears were sustained when in 2024 a section of the pipeline failed during hydro testing, a process that uses pressurized water to check pipe integrity.

And in the summer of 2023 a TC Energy natural gas pipeline in the Shenandoah Valley exploded, likely due to cracking in the pipe.

In each of these cases, PHMSA has had critical responsibilities conducting testing during construction, investigating pipeline failures, and imposing corrective action. As this committee takes on reauthorization of the pipeline safety program, we must ensure that PHMSA has the personnel and resources it needs to carry out its vital responsibilities and keep our communities safe. So I am glad that Ranking Member Castor asked questions on that point.

The Mountain Valley Pipeline cuts through the Jefferson National Forest and crosses hundreds of waterways and wetlands.

And since the start of the project, there have been around 1,500 reported pollution incidents impacting rivers, streams, and drinking water supply. During construction and testing of the Mountain Valley Pipeline, we heard that farmers and landowners were seeking more communication and engagement from PHMSA around the risks to their land and water resources, which I think is just as important a safety concern that we should all be worried about.

So Mr. Caram, I appreciate the Pipeline Safety Trust's work to make pipeline safety information more readily available and accessible to the public. And in addition to addressing the reckless workforce cuts that we have seen, how would you recommend that PHMSA improve its efforts to prevent pollution incidents and better engage community members?

Mr. CARAM. Thank you for the question.

I think it comes back to strong regulations and effective enforcement in pipeline safety management systems in order to limit these incidents. And really, all three need to work together. There's lots of room for improvement on all three, and I hope the committee is looking to take that on.

As far as community engagement, you know, the Pipeline Safety Trust has really believed that an Office of Public Engagement at PHMSA would be a big improvement. Public engagement hasn't been a strength of the agency historically, but they have made improvements in recent years. But I hate to see how going from 13 employees down to 3 is going to backpedal that progress that they have made.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. I agree with that.

Community members and environmental groups have long raised concerns about potential corrosion issues in the Mountain Valley Pipeline in particular, which has been laying in fields, exposed to the elements for years before all permit approvals were forced through in the 2023 debt ceiling bill.

Corrosion is also a growing issue for pipelines in coastal areas, where rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion, exacerbated by climate change, are speeding up pipe degradation.

So, Mr. Caram, as we look at reauthorizing this pipeline safety program, what additional authorities or resources does PHMSA need to better address corrosion control to ensure pipeline safety?

Mr. CARAM. So there's two main defenses against corrosion. One is coding. That is really the first line of defense. And when coding fails, the second line of defense is cathodic protection. PHMSA has made some improvements to the cathodic protection on natural gas transmission pipelines recently, and we look forward to seeing how those are impacted—how those impact failures and effects of corrosion.

But there aren't specific regulations on the condition of coding. They are pretty vague, and they leave a lot up to the operator's judgment. The consent order we saw with Mountain Valley Pipeline put some prescriptions on what coding—tests coding needs to pass and things like that, and those would make a great addition to the regulations for all pipelines.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Thank you. And I don't have time for you to answer my last question, but for the record—because we also need to worry about cybersecurity—and I would be curious to—Mr. Caram,

to know if you think that PHMSA and DHS—CISA in particular—are still well equipped to monitor and combat growing cyber threats to pipelines. And if you could submit that for the record, I would appreciate it.

Mr. CARAM. Thank you.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired, and the Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alabama's 6th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I will allow you to answer that question from Ms. McClellan. That is in line with some of my questions.

Mr. CARAM. Well, I will say that cybersecurity is not really in the wheelhouse of pipeline safety for our organization. It is more of a reliability issue. So we don't really dig into the weeds on it.

The way we have approached it is the integrity management program for high-consequence areas requires an operator to identify all potential threats against the pipeline, create a plan to mitigate against those threats, and implement that plan. And cybersecurity threats should be considered one of those threats, and PHMSA could adopt some specific standards within integrity management.

To the rest of your question, as far as agency coordination, is beyond my expertise.

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Black, I would like for you to take a shot at that question, as well.

But back in 2021 we had a ransomware attack on the Colonial Pipeline, which was in my district, and there have been multiple attacks at various healthcare facilities around the country. And as more pipeline networks enter—become part of that equation, the threat of another attack is very much a real possibility, whether it is a fuel line like the Colonial Pipeline or other pipelines. Can you address what—where you think we are in terms of protecting our pipelines from cyber attacks and what we need to do to protect them?

Mr. BLACK. I am glad to address both. Cybersecurity is very important to pipelines.

Like any Fortune 500 company, pipeline operators need to maintain safeguards to protect their commercial systems and their operational systems. They will do that in concert with the Transportation Security Administration, working with them on cyber directives.

I believe you asked about CISA reauthorization. LEPA supports reauthorization of CISA. That will give pipeline operators the opportunity, a safe place to work with governments to talk about threats. It is quite important that PHMSA coordinate with those—with cybersecurity expertise to make sure that anything that PHMSA does is in concert with what they know about how to do cybersecurity for pipelines, which—quickly evolving technologies and threats. Very important.

Mr. PALMER. So are you hearing much on that from industry?

Mr. BLACK. Every day we know there are attempts to breach—of breaches. I participate in classified briefings from government. We must always have our guard on pipeline safety. Thankfully, there are recommended practices. There are interactions with gov-

ernment and experts to try and improve that. We can never be—stop our vigilance.

Mr. PALMER. Do you feel like PHMSA is weighing in on this properly, they are doing their part? Or is there—do we need to be doing more?

Mr. BLACK. PHMSA is not key on cybersecurity, and I think that is OK. We will work with CISA and with TSA. We need PHMSA to make sure they are talking with them. Many of these briefings, PHMSA is a part of those. That coordination should be done right to make sure there is not conflicts and overlapping and pipeline operators being told to do two different things. We need to make sure we are doing that right.

Mr. PALMER. Do we know if these are just—in the ransomware attack situation with Colonial Pipeline, that was just some people trying to extort money. But do we have a nation state involved in this, or people who are being given safe harbors? We know they are in China and Russia and other places to launch these attacks. Is there any——

Mr. BLACK. Generally, yes. And I know there is people I can encourage you to talk to in government that can help you more. But we must be vigilant and must be working on this well every——

Mr. PALMER. Yes, my concern about this transcends the pipelines. I mean, it is the critical infrastructure across the country that could be subject to a cyber attack, whether it is a ransomware attack or, you know, from a state-sponsored terrorist group.

I mean, it could be anything, and I think that our grid, in its totality, not just the power grid but the entire totality of the grid, whether it is pipelines or power, we have got to make this a very serious issue, not—a top priority——

Mr. BLACK. We Americans——

Mr. PALMER [continuing]. For protecting——

Mr. BLACK [continuing]. Use all these forms of energy every day, and we can't afford to have something down from a cyber incident. You are absolutely right. Thank you for paying attention to that.

Mr. PALMER. Well, I appreciate your response.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Colorado's 1st District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. DEGETTE. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to all the witnesses.

Mr. Black, I am peering around here to you. You just said we should always have the eye on pipeline safety, and you were talking about cyber. But I am assuming you mean in every respect pipeline safety is really critical for this country. Is that correct?

Mr. BLACK. I am making sure you are looking at me, Congresswoman.

Ms. DEGETTE. Thank you.

Mr. BLACK. Yes, of course. Pipeline safety is our goal.

Ms. DEGETTE. And Ms. Miller, I assume you would agree with that too.

Mr. Caram?

Ms. MILLER. I would agree, as well.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Caram?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, I agree.

Ms. DEGETTE. And Mr. Moriarty?

Mr. MORIARTY. Yes, I do.

Ms. DEGETTE. Yes, it is sort of a fundamental. As we are transporting more material through pipelines and many of them aging because of the administration's emphasis on oil and gas development, we need to make sure that our pipelines are safe. We need to figure out a way, preferably in a bipartisan way, to do that statutorily. And that is what we are talking about here today.

But I was recently reading an article in The Wall Street Journal, and it talked about how the number of violation reviews has dropped by 95 percent in the first 4 months of this President Trump's second term, compared to the same period under President Biden, and at number—and a 93 percent drop compared to Donald Trump's first term.

And at the same time, the President has said that he doesn't want enforcement in a lot of these areas. And so I am—and so—and also, of course, then there is DOGE unceremoniously just having these layoffs across government, which we don't really know how many of those people were laid off, I don't think, at PHMSA. But given the dramatic drop of open reviews of safety violations, I am not sure that that means that there aren't violations. It just, I think, means that there aren't reviews.

So Mr. Caram, I want to ask you, isn't it true that significant pipeline incidents have not decreased over the past 20 years?

Mr. CARAM. That is true.

Ms. DEGETTE. So let's talk about the Keystone Pipeline leak in Kansas, which was just 3 years ago, the largest offshore oil spill in almost a decade, and the third major spill in 5 years. That was quite serious, is that right?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, that was a lot of oil.

Ms. DEGETTE. A lot of oil. And then last year a pipeline in Louisiana leaked for almost 2 hours because there were no pipeline operators on site, and the monitoring equipment malfunctioned. So that meant many residents weren't even notified of the leak. That was also pretty serious, wasn't it?

Mr. CARAM. Yes.

Ms. DEGETTE. And are there other examples of leaks that we are seeing that are just happening right now?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, you can look at the NTSB open investigation docket and see lots of examples of what the NTSB is investigating. Also their recently closed. There was a million-gallon spill off the coast of Louisiana that they just completed their investigation of, and unfortunately there is many, many stories.

Ms. DEGETTE. So reducing the number—so the fact there is fewer safety violations, that doesn't mean necessarily there is that many—95 percent fewer leaks.

Mr. CARAM. Correct.

Ms. DEGETTE. So before the Trump administration took over, PHMSA was already deemed to be understaffed and underfunded. Is that right?

Mr. CARAM. Yes.

Ms. DEGETTE. And then, since President Trump took office, more than half of the senior executive roles at PHMSA are empty due to a hiring freeze and buy-out offers from DOGE. Is that right?

Mr. CARAM. As far as I know, it is.

Ms. DEGETTE. OK. And now the Trump administration's recent budget request would keep PHMSA's funding completely flat, and is $16 million less than the Biden administration's last proposed budget. Is that your understanding?

Mr. CARAM. I have not looked at the President's budget.

Ms. DEGETTE. OK. Now, so if we have flat or reduced staffing, what risk is that going to pose to public safety, do you think?

Mr. CARAM. Well, I believe that PHMSA was already an underresourced, understaffed agency, given the huge charge that they have on pipeline safety and the 3 million miles of pipeline. We wanted to see significant increases to that funding. And seeing flat or reduced funding, I can't imagine how that won't——

Ms. DEGETTE. So will that——

Mr. CARAM [continuing]. Impact safety.

Ms. DEGETTE [continuing]. Help with inspections, safety inspections?

Mr. CARAM. We would like to see that, an—

Ms. DEGETTE. No, no, I mean——

Mr. CARAM [continuing]. Increase in funding.

Ms. DEGETTE [continuing]. Would the decreased funding help with increasing safety inspections?

Mr. CARAM. No. My understanding is the reductions in force, the inspectors were protected from those reductions in force, and they were not allowed to participate in that program, but we haven't seen any numbers on that.

But I will say that, beyond just inspectors, the entire agency is dedicated to safety, and they support inspectors. They support regulations and enforcement. And so any reduction——

Mr. LATTA. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. DEGETTE. Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas's 11th District, 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have some questions that I will get to, but does anybody have any thoughts on this last discussion we just heard, that safety incidents are out of control, or want to push back on anything?

Mr. Black?

Mr. BLACK. Sure, I will cover enforcement. I divide this year into two chapters. Before PHMSA introduced Office of Chief Counsel memos adopting mandates from Congress in the 2020 Act—since then I understand enforcement numbers are more similar. Before then, even when numbers were lower, the quality was high in terms of responding to the major incidents. On two lines they issued corrective action orders, and the industry supports PHMSA being an effective regulator.

Mr. PFLUGER. Yes, OK.

Ms. MILLER. I would just echo that our members do encourage that we have a strong and well-informed, well-resourced regulator for the—but not only the safety, but also make sure that we have predictable expectations for our operations.

Mr. PFLUGER. Yes, but reasonable——

Ms. MILLER. Correct.

Mr. PFLUGER [continuing]. Being the key word, yes, thank you. OK. And Ms. Miller, I will stick with you and I will start with the gas gathering rule. And as you are aware, this significantly expanded PHMSA's jurisdiction, bringing more than 400,000 additional miles of gathering lines under Federal oversight. And they are located in districts like mine in the Permian Basin, where there is a heavy presence of production there, and very important.

And the scope of implementation of this rule could have major implications for how the gathering systems are built and operated going forward, so we want to get this right. We want to be reasonable, and safety is important. It is a major concern, and there are other concerns, as well.

But from your perspective, what implementation challenges are operators currently facing on the ground?

And how can PHMSA better distinguish between high-risk and then lower-risk areas? Again, reasonable in the way governments—which is not always the way it is done, but——

Ms. MILLER. No, I appreciate that question very much.

Yes, we do very much value the opportunity to have risk-based assessment of safety concerns. There—just because, for example, a pipeline may have—two different pipelines may have a similar diameter or similar pressure, there are other circumstances to consider in order to make sure that we are assessing what the risk is appropriately, including, for example, proximity to populations, length of pipeline.

One of the things I also wanted to make sure that this subcommittee is familiar with is the difference between—the differences that exist between gathering pipelines and transmission pipelines, not only physically but commercially. So it is important to remember that the interstate pipelines are subject to regulated rates with uniform tariffs versus gathering pipelines are subject to market-based, negotiated compensation and negotiated commercial terms. So very different application.

Mr. PFLUGER. I am sorry that more of my colleagues aren't here to hear that. And we always take trips down there, and we do point out the difference in the Permian Basin of gathering systems versus the larger pipelines, interstate type.

And just real quickly—and I want to get to Mr. Moriarty—but having frequent GPAC meetings and ensuring participation from stakeholders, what is the importance of that and how does that help PHMSA regulate?

Ms. MILLER. We really appreciate the GPAC process. We think it helps bring more informed regulation, which therefore is more likely to be implementable. And we want to encourage that that GPAC process also include more insights from gathering operators when it is regulating as it is more—as PHMSA is more often regulating gathering now.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you.

Just I had—Mr. Moriarty, I had some things I was going to say, but let me just get right to the question. In your view, is there any realistic path to a reliable grid without natural gas playing a role as the backbone—the backbone?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you, Congressman. No, there is not.

Mr. PFLUGER. And would you agree that, if we are going to meet the rising demand while also keeping the lights on, that we need to get serious about modernizing and expanding our natural gas infrastructure? And give us your thoughts on that.

Mr. MORIARTY. Yes, I would agree with that. Natural gas pipelines are the safest way to move the energy that this Nation needs. And there is ever more demand for energy across our service territories, which is the United States. And to meet those demands, we need to construct and safely operate pipelines, as well as LNG storage facilities.

Mr. PFLUGER. Where did the negativity come from in this country towards pipelines? Like, I mean, what—how did we get here?

Mr. MORIARTY. Well, I don't know. At Chesapeake Utilities—and that is what I can speak of—we take very seriously our obligations to the communities we serve. And those communities are where we live and where we work.

Mr. PFLUGER. Yes.

Mr. MORIARTY. So if an issue is raised with us, we immediately study it and address it. So I am not quite sure what is happening elsewhere.

Mr. PFLUGER. Yes. Science and math. They are the safest form of transportation and transmission. And they keep the lights on.

I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired, and he yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts's 4th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Thank you, Chairman. I appreciate the witnesses being here today.

I do want to start off by echoing the comments from my colleague from New Jersey, Mr. Menendez. Like him, I sat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last Congress. The difference in process on pipeline safety reauthorization between what I saw there and what has been described about this committee's process last year could not be more different.

On T&I it was a bipartisan bill. Not everyone got everything they wanted, but everyone got something, and we were able to move the ball on safety. And it just seems like that is the opposite of what happened here last year. I really hope this time is different, because there is a lot of areas where we can move the ball forward in a bipartisan way.

Mr. Caram, did the Pipeline Safety Trust think that there were serious issues with the partisan bill that E&C Republicans put forward last year?

Mr. CARAM. There were—as mentioned earlier, there were several provisions in the bill that had nothing to do with pipeline safety, like permitting reform, gas stove protections, and CCS well permitting that really don't have anything to do with pipeline safety.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Mr. Black, you had said earlier that your constituency wants—industry wants predictable regulation. Is that right?

Mr. BLACK. Yes, sir.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Do you think that when items that are unrelated to the core issue of pipeline safety and that have a strongly

polarized and partisan bent to them are added to pipeline safety bills, does that make the overall product more or less predictable?

Mr. BLACK. Well, we support Congress reauthorizing the pipeline safety laws. We supported the T&I bill and the Energy and Commerce bill. In the end, we want good policies enacted. It is up to you all to—how to do it.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Right. But if the policies enacted are done on a partisan basis, does that inspire more or less confidence in the industry that they can count on those regulations over a generational time span? Because you are making long-term capital investments, right? So having the goalpost move on you, not helpful.

Mr. BLACK. I mean, I understand your question. We wanted Congress to act on reauthorization last time. We had priorities. We haven't achieved them. We would like you to do it now, whatever that takes.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. And Mr. Caram, I assume you didn't think it was perfect, but did the Pipeline Safety Trust think that the bipartisan T&I bill was closer to the mark than the partisan E&C bill?

Mr. CARAM. Yes. There were some good provisions in there. We didn't think it went far enough to make a real meaningful difference on pipeline safety, but there were really good provisions that we supported and support.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. And did you want to weigh in on that, Mr. Black?

Mr. BLACK. We supported both bills.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. You supported both bills, but they were very different bills. So was there elements of T&I or E&C that you thought were particularly productive?

Mr. BLACK. I am trying to remember. There were things that were in Energy and Commerce that weren't in T&I, and we were hoping that that would get reconciled if there was one big bill going to the floor.

We—you know, bipartisan action is necessary to make a law. How you start, again, is up to you all. Our goal is smart public policies that are improving safety.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Bipartisan action is necessary to make a law.

Mr. BLACK. Sure.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Agreed. I want to be positive today, talk about some of the important things to include in the pipeline safety package, rather than just the process that I didn't think was productive.

One point that has come across in multiple testimonies is that some States could stand to improve their programs to prevent third-party excavation damages. Mr. Caram, could you talk a little bit about what changes States can make to those programs and how PHMSA and Congress could play a role?

Mr. CARAM. Sure. I think that is an area where all four witnesses agree on the improvements to be made. The Common Ground Alliance has a set of best practices for State programs, and some States implement all of those best practices and others don't. And having those as the baseline for all States, I think, would make a big improvement on damage prevention.

Things like exemptions to 811——

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Yes.

Mr. CARAM [continuing]. Certain States allow certain municipalities not to have to call 811, for example, and not allowing that would be great.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Does anybody want to weigh in on that?

Mr. BLACK. All these industries are going to support improved damage prevention. There are provisions, I believe, that were in the T&I bill last time—I can't remember about Energy and Commerce—to move forward damage prevention, and we would support those.

Mr. AUCHINCLOSS. Yes, the T&I bill had some good stuff in there.

I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Tennessee's 1st District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Can you see me for that big chair?

Ms. Miller, as Ranking Member Pallone stated, GPA successfully argued that some PHMSA regulations have not been cost effective. But how important is cost-effective regulation for operators as you prioritize safety?

Ms. MILLER. We believe cost benefit analysis that is part of the PHMSA regulation rulemaking process is very important. We want to make sure that we are able to prioritize the highest-value safety priorities and also make sure that regulation is implementable, that there is technology actually available in order to achieve those goals.

The process now for the implementation of rules which provides for input from the GPAC process but also from the public ensures that there is a more informed regulation that is more likely to be executed.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Was the leak detection and repair rule finalized by the previous administration workable for operators?

And did it align with the congressional intent of the PIPES Act of 2020?

Ms. MILLER. We do not believe that it did. We do support leak detection and repair technologies being implemented in accordance with Congress' mandate.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. OK. All right. You know, there is an increasing threat to pipeline safety, as we all know, from bad actors that wish to cause harm to pipelines and surrounding communities. In 2022 there was a movie entitled, "How to Blow Up a Pipeline," and it was portrayed by a group of teenagers trying to blow up an oil pipeline to protest climate change.

Mr. Black, what measures have operators taken to prevent bad actors disrupting pipelines and jeopardizing public safety?

Mr. BLACK. It was so sad to see a movie that was glorifying attacks on pipelines. I remember at the time us encouraging Federal actors to put out bulletins to be looking for copycat activities on that. Thankfully, I am not aware of anything that happened because of that movie.

Congress can help by closing loopholes and make it clear that, if you just turn a valve or damage a pipeline component—you think you are not hurting anything—you could be leading to a pressure

buildup or a rupture later that hurts yourself, people, and the environment.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Yes, absolutely.

Ms. Miller, how can Congress ensure that pipeline permitting timelines are predictable and not subject to unnecessary delays in litigation?

Ms. MILLER. Well, we would appreciate Congress' attention to that. We do think that the permitting for pipelines which are essential to be—to deliver natural gas to the communities that need it is very important. And there is an opportunity to make sure that that is a balanced process that reflects not only the need to have access to energy but also safety and environmental protections. And we believe that is possible.

We also believe that that is very important, an important priority for our operators across the industry.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. OK. Mr. Moriarty, as the U.S. expands hydrogen pipeline networks, what unique safety and regulatory challenges do these fuels represent?

And how should PHMSA's mandate evolve to address them?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you very much for the question. It is a very good question.

We have been blending hydrogen with natural gas at a facility that we have in Florida. And we have blended up to 5 percent, and it was not only inexpensive but also very good for the generation that was happening there. So we are we are bullish on the role of hydrogen.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Yes.

Mr. MORIARTY. What we are still studying, and I think the industry is studying, is how much blending can occur without challenging the integrity of those pipelines.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Yes.

Mr. MORIARTY. Our interstate pipeline infrastructure is the envy of the world. I mean, we are able to deliver energy and so many others, you know, to the people here in the country as well as to the industry. So we see further study on that as helpful as you consider PHMSA's reauthorization.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. OK. Thank you, sir. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Dakota for 5 minutes for questions.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Excellent. Thank you. I wasn't expecting to be up so soon. I am usually the very last, so I guess it pays to stick around.

Well, thank you all for being here. I appreciate you lending your expertise to this very, very important subject. I have been a pipeline proponent for many years. I spent 12 years as a utility regulator and permitted a lot of pipelines myself in the State of North Dakota, so I want to talk a little bit about the State role first.

I recognize that—I have recognized the challenges at PHMSA in terms of staffing for years. One of the challenges is they don't operate a State inspection training program as effectively as they could to help get more State inspectors out there. It takes too long to certify these people.

So what do you think they could be doing to help?

And what are you guys focusing on in terms of encouraging PHMSA to use, like, remote training programs and really get the training system up to speed so that the State inspectors can hit the ground running sooner?

Mr. Black, maybe you and Mr. Caram——

Mr. BLACK. It is great to have you on the committee, given your role in North Dakota. Thank you, and welcome.

State inspectors with quality experience and knowledge on pipeline inspections is very important. I have been to PHMSA's Training Center in Oklahoma City. And you're right, it is important to be able to expand the capacity of that training. It is in the industry's interest that anybody inspecting a pipeline is quality, knows what they are doing, and is working in concert with others. We would like to do that.

We would like to also see States reduce damage prevention exemptions so that we can protect pipeline safety, and then to work in their inspections with PHMSA to make sure that they are not duplicative when PHMSA has approved a State to inspect interstate transmission.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. OK. I would encourage you to encourage PHMSA to do online training for State inspectors, at least for some of the programs. They don't have to be present.

Mr. BLACK. I will make that call today.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. If they could do that——

Mr. BLACK. Thank you.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Yes. Mr. Caram, any——

Mr. CARAM. Yes, I will echo Mr. Black's comment. I welcome your expertise and experience to the subcommittee, and I think the quality of your question really shows the—that expertise that you bring. And so thank you for it.

It is a—you have identified a real issue with State programs. I think, in addition to how long training takes, I think, you know, increasing firms' ability to attract and retain talent—I know there is a lot of competition for these inspectors once they are trained to be, you know, paid more by the industry. And so giving PHMSA more—well, giving the State programs more flexibility under the PHMSA program in their ability to attract and retain through the funding and their agreements, I think, would go a long way in keeping that talent on the State programs longer.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. OK, very good. Thank you. I would also encourage you to make those comments to PHMSA.

Mr. CARAM. I will do so.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. The—I am curious about this demonstration program that was kind of choked off by the last administration.

Mr. Black, I mean, everybody here has talked about the use of technology, and that is something that we can—should be able to agree on on a bipartisan manner. Let's use the technology for a better purpose.

What do we need to do to reinvigorate this pilot program so we can test some of this stuff and get it in the field?

Mr. BLACK. First, Congresswoman, reauthorize the program in this upcoming reauthorization. It lapsed. Nobody uses it. It was because PHMSA applied rules that you all didn't tell them to do. So

tell them to do it without bureaucratic hurdles. I don't think they will apply the special permit process to it—or NEPA to these decisions, but show PHMSA the importance that you have in demonstrating new technologies and how they can improve pipeline safety.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. OK, very good. And then my last question will have to be quick.

Our infrastructure is aging, but it is really, really hard for companies to build new pipelines. I mean, so this one goes to you, Mr. Caram. You have got kind of a bully pulpit to talk about these issues in terms of a public safety position, and talk about the value of pipelines in terms of being the safest method to transport a lot of these products.

What are you doing to help educate the public about the need for replacing old, aging pipelines that are more prone to leaks with the new stuff to—and to help advocate for permitting processes that are certain and the construction of a new pipeline after that?

Mr. CARAM. Well, we don't necessarily see the, you know, permitting reform as part of our mission on pipeline safety. But we do advocate for, you know, the pipe replacement program that was in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and has been some draft legislation on this round of reauthorization. And we continue to support that program to replace that aging, leak-prone, problematic pipe.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. OK. I am over time, sorry. Thank you all, I appreciate——

Mr. LATTA. The gentlelady's time——

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. I yield back.

Mr. LATTA [continuing]. Has expired, and yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas's 33rd District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and let me start by reaffirming, I think, what we all know to be true, and that pipeline safety is not a luxury, but it is a necessity. And we rely on over literally 3 million miles of pipeline to move energy and materials that power this country. It is very critical for keeping our houses cool and keeping them warm, and jobs.

So I mean, it is important for everything, and that is why PHMSA's mission is so important and it is why this committee's work to reauthorize PHMSA is long overdue. I think that we have let the agency's authorities lapse, even as pipeline miles expand and aging infrastructure strains and new fuels like hydrogen and CO_2 are finally starting to enter the system.

And as a Texan, I know better than most how central pipelines are to American energy. They are efficient, they are economical, and they are essential. But they are also not infallible, and we have to look for ways that we can raise the bar on safety. With new energy demand surging, the country growing, things like hydrogen and CO_2 infrastructure coming online, and extreme weather risks—and extreme—weather extremes increasing, the stakes really couldn't be higher.

We need PHMSA to ensure that we have the tools, the staff, and the authority to really prioritize safety and reduce leaks and protect a lot of our communities, as well as we experience this growth and this new demand for energy.

And so I think that what we really need to be asking ourselves is, How can we make real progress on pipeline safety without getting bogged down in partisanship, which is something that I have really stressed a lot on, being on the subcommittee? And so at the end of the day, this hearing is not just about policy, but it is really whether—about families can feel safe in their homes and businesses and whether or not we are going to have the energy that we needed.

And so I wanted to ask Mr. Caram, your organization often works across stakeholder lines. And I wanted to ask, like, what are two or three practical, bipartisan steps this committee could take in reauthorization that would increase pipeline safety and community trust but still be workable for the industry?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you so much for that question. Two things come to mind, both of which I mentioned briefly.

The first is in-home methane detectors or natural gas alarms. The NTSB has been recommending these devices for some time. There has been some disagreement as to whether that is really under PHMSA or a State program's jurisdiction, but I firmly believe that it is part of an operator's public awareness responsibilities and could be part of the public awareness regulations. And you know, this subcommittee could make that happen.

We saw in Japan, when they adopted widespread use of natural gas alarms, we saw the incidents decreased by 90 percent. I firmly believe that widespread adoption of natural gas alarms will make a meaningful difference quickly on fatalities from pipelines.

And another would be fire shutoff valves, or thermally activated shutoff valves. These would help mitigate the damage from a fire in a building that could be made worse by the presence of gas service. They are very simple, inexpensive devices. I believe they cost $75. They are required in Massachusetts already, and have been for some time.

A low melting point polymer keeps the valve open. When exposed to heat it automatically closes, and it would prevent gas from making that fire worse and fueling it. They don't require any ongoing maintenance, and they are very easy to install on existing service lines.

Mr. VEASEY. Yes. I also wanted to ask you—we know that communities are more likely to push back on CO_2 and hydrogen projects if they don't understand the risks or benefits. And we see—we now see this happening across the Midwest with the CO_2 pipelines. What tools like mapping, early engagement, or postincident transparency can Congress support to build trust in these next-gen pipelines?

Mr. CARAM. I think the biggest piece of building trust for this type of pipeline is improving the regulations. There are glaring regulatory gaps. Certain types of CO_2 pipelines aren't covered by any minimum safety regulations. And the regulations that do apply, the pipelines that are covered by regulations, those regulations are—don't really address the unique physical properties and risks that CO_2 pose.

So I think the biggest thing that could be done for building trust in these pipelines is modernizing the regulations.

Mr. VEASEY. Yes. No, that makes sense.

And Mr. Chairman, as I get ready to close, I hope that too we can address this again to talk about how we can get the public more involved before something bad happens. Oftentimes something—it takes something really bad to happen before the public really gets engaged. We need to start looking at how we can get in front of a lot of these things and not just be responding to, you know, unfortunate situations.

I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The gentleman's time has expired, and he yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia's 12th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chair Latta, and thank you for holding this important hearing to discuss policy on expanding our pipeline capacity. I want to thank the witnesses for being here to testify.

Building up our pipeline capacity is critical to delivering affordable energy to our constituents across the country and our allies. We have heard from the witnesses that pipelines are the safest way to deliver energy. As we are working on modernizing the role of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA, it is critical we ensure it works to enhance our pipeline infrastructure.

Mr. Moriarty——

Mr. MORIARTY. Yes, sir.

Mr. ALLEN. You work in the local distribution of natural gas. Could you expand on how you get gas safely into communities, and the need to build up pipeline capacity to deliver low-cost energy to consumers?

Mr. MORIARTY. Well, thank you very much for that question. I would like to answer it by an example.

Somerset County in Maryland did not have access to natural gas. The county there was desperate to get new energy delivered because of the economic development that would occur and the increase in employment. We worked closely with the community as well as with the State, and we now built a pipeline into Somerset County. So for the first time they have access to natural gas, which has led to more building, more manufacturing, and more jobs.

Mr. ALLEN. That is a great example, and thank you for that.

Mr. Black and Ms. Miller, you both mentioned the need to reform the special permit program. Can you share how reforming this program will expand pipeline infrastructure projects?

Mr. BLACK. The special permit program has been nearly broken by the application of unnecessary conditions that are unrelated to the waiver being requested, and they have taken too long. PHMSA should reform the special permit process, and Congress should tell them that they should.

Decision delays—decision deadlines, excuse me—and no extraneous conditions, how will that help? They are—one-size-fits-all regulations can't possibly apply to all the different types of conditions, operations, pipe that is out there. If we reform the special permit process, get people using it, have regulations that are suited to that specific pipe, that contributes to unleashing energy because we can have the pipe that we need to go where we need it to go.

Mr. ALLEN. OK, Ms. Miller?

Ms. MILLER. I would echo what Mr. Black said. We agree that not only does the special permit program offer that opportunity, but I would point out as well that performance-based measures and PHMSA pipeline safety programming can allow for the evolving technology in order for more fit-for-purpose solutions.

Mr. ALLEN. OK. As a followup, how can PHMSA modernize the special permit process so operators can realize the intended benefits of the process?

Mr. Miller? Ms. Miller, I am sorry.

Ms. MILLER. Thank you. I would actually—I defer to Mr. Black, who did such a nice job of describing the special permit program——

Mr. ALLEN. OK.

Ms. MILLER [continuing]. And the opportunities for improving upon it. But we echo that there is an opportunity to allow for the fit-for-purpose solutions that bring better safety outcomes.

Mr. ALLEN. OK. Mr. Black?

Mr. BLACK. Congressman, no unrelated conditions. Deal with what the pipeline operator is requesting. Don't take this opportunity to impose something else. Do that through the regulatory process.

Second, have a decision deadline so that permits get ruled on and we get these changes made.

Mr. ALLEN. OK. All right. Ms. Miller, it is my understanding that you have some LNG members. I believe exporting LNG to our allies is key to our national security.

Can you share how updating pipeline safety programs would be beneficial to our LNG exports?

Ms. MILLER. Having a greater supply available for export not only facilitates the export of that to our allies, but that also has environmental benefits because natural gas is a more environmentally friendly energy source. And energy demands, of course, are increasing around the world. Making that available across the world, our American natural gas around the world, it provides benefits for us all.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, and this is a great opportunity for us to maybe reverse the trade deficit issues and other things that, obviously, the President is working on. Would that be correct?

Ms. MILLER. I agree.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, OK. All right. Well, thank you so much for—to you all for being here today.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Washington's 8th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses.

I want to start just by expressing how important pipeline safety is all over, but particularly in my home State. It has been about 26 years since the Olympic pipeline explosion in Bellingham, which is less than an hour from my district. And this tragedy killed three young people, injured eight more, and severely impacted the ecosystem and the nearby communities. And many of the safety protections and considerations currently in place stem from this trag-

edy. So I just wanted to remind us all why we are here and why PHMSA is so important.

I would love to just turn to hydrogen, a fuel that Washington State is heavily investing in. Mr. Moriarty, in your testimony you discussed the role that your utility plays in the Mid-Atlantic Hydrogen Hub. I was wondering if you could discuss the economic opportunities that this hub will bring to your region.

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you for that question.

There was a great deal of excitement when MACH2 was announced, which is our hydrogen hub in Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey. Our role as a company was going to be to use our Safety Town, which is where we have built little houses and little facilities. And I say little, it is just—all the appliances that you would use are in there. And we use that to train our employees but also to train first responders.

Our role at MACH2 was going to be to blend hydrogen into those energy sources to see how they reacted, and then to help train our folks and others to do that. So there was a great deal of excitement when it first started.

Ms. SCHRIER. That is really cool, that MACH2 has Safety Town there to do practice and drills, and I think it all makes all of us feel better.

We also were very excited about—and we are very excited about being a hydrogen hub in Washington State. In particular in Washington, where we have 70 percent of our power comes from hydropower, there it is clean hydrogen, which is particularly exciting. It is a way to store that excess energy.

And it is one of the reasons I am so disappointed that this administration and House Republicans are undermining the efforts toward hydrogen, which is our—one of our important future fuels. When they deliberated about the One Big, Ugly Bill, they slashed tax credits for clean energy, including weakening the 45V clean hydrogen tax credit, which is crucial to get this nascent hydrogen industry off the ground. And both MACH2 and the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub may be on the chopping block, according to some leaked documents.

I will also note that one of the largest hydrogen hubs is in Texas, and that these exist in red States and blue States and all over, and we need to be thinking about the future.

For the purposes of this hearing and safety, I just wanted to discuss again the knowledge gaps that we still need to fill in, in terms of how to integrate hydrogen fuel into the existing pipeline systems and infrastructure through blending and later, hopefully, maybe even on its own. And these safety issues have not been fully discussed.

Mr. Caram, it is good to see you again. We talked about some of these unknowns the last time you were here and why further studies are needed to evaluate what modifications are needed to existing infrastructure to be compatible with hydrogen. We didn't know a ton at the time. It has been about a year. We still haven't passed PHMSA reauthorization with a hydrogen blending study to address these safety concerns.

And I was wondering if you could speak to the urgency of this, the consequences of not filling those knowledge gaps sooner rather than later.

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you for the question.

At this point operators do not need to report to anyone, including PHMSA or their State regulator, if they are blending hydrogen into their system, as long as it is below 50 percent. So we don't really know how urgent this is because we are not aware of how many operators are blending hydrogen into existing systems.

I will say that the knowledge gaps and research gaps and regulatory gaps that we discussed last time are largely still present. There hasn't been a lot of progress made, as far as I know.

Ms. SCHRIER. Well, I hope the way we discover the problems isn't through a catastrophe at Safety Town and figuring out where there are gaps in our knowledge and pipelines. So I want to thank you, and I will yield back unless you want to use those 6 seconds.

You looked too eager to say something. No?

OK, I will yield back. Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Iowa's 1st District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you so much, Chairman Latta and Ranking Member Castor, for holding this important hearing on pipeline safety.

American energy dominance requires modern pipeline infrastructure and effective regulations that truly consider the cost benefit of additional bureaucratic barriers. These pipelines heat our homes and power our farms. They deliver energy affordably and safely across the country, making modern life possible. To think if we replaced every pipeline with a semi tractor trailer truck, tanker, or railcar, how much more safety would be put at risk?

We need clear Federal standards, not 20-year-old rules that ignore modern technology and innovation. This isn't complicated. Focus on actual safety. Streamline permitting. American energy security depends on building the infrastructure, and that means smart, targeted policies, not one-size-fits-all mandates that threaten reliability and investment.

And to your point, Mr. Moriarty, I have—since I have been in Congress, which was January 3, 2021—have been talking with two of my counties in southeast Iowa along the Mississippi River who desperately want more pipeline natural gas delivered to them, and it is absolutely affecting economic growth. And they have lost businesses relocating there because of this issue.

Mr. Black, your members use advanced technologies for leak detection voluntarily. Why is flexibility important in allowing operators to deploy the right technology for their specific systems, rather than having a prospective mandate from the Federal Government?

Mr. BLACK. Well, first, technology, Congresswoman. There are lots of different types of pipelines. There are ones that have many laterals and many injection points and takeoffs, and there are ones that just go one direction. It is important to have a leak detection program that reflects the characteristics of that system. If there are prescriptive regulations, first, those might become quickly obso-

lescent by advancing technology. Second, they might not reflect the unique characteristics of that pipeline.

Right now PHMSA inspects pipeline operators, asks them about how they are approaching their pipeline system, and has that type of conversation. That is the way that it should be.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. So it is sort of like the Federal Government telling a farmer how much input, how much pesticide, fungicide, fertilizer, when to harvest, when to plant, not knowing when the corn is dry, when the ground is ready, how much rain they are expecting, and if there is flooding.

Mr. BLACK. That sounds right.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. OK, thank you.

Mr. Moriarty, Congress mandated a safety program for idled pipelines in 2020, but it hasn't been implemented. As an operator, what unique risks do idled pipelines pose, and why do we need Federal standards?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you for that question.

Idle pipelines are wasted capacity that could be repurposed for other uses. We try to ensure that all the pipelines that we have are fully utilized and they are safe. I think when you idle a pipeline and it is not being used, you just raise the risks of safety with those pipelines.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Again for Mr. Moriarty, you describe sophisticated cybersecurity measures at Chesapeake. How can PHMSA support industry-led cybersecurity efforts without creating duplicative regulations with TSA and other agency requirements?

Mr. MORIARTY. Well, thank you very much.

Cybersecurity is one of the top risks that face companies like ours. We have invested a great deal in a cyber team. We have one of the best in the country, and we are very, very proud of that. We have attacks daily from nation states and others. We have partners at the FBI and other places that we deal with where we share information.

I think if PHMSA were to step in, we would want a holistic approach, because time is of the essence when you are dealing with a cyber event.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you.

And Ms. Miller, CO_2 has been used for enhanced oil recovery for decades, helping maximize domestic energy production. Can you explain how CO_2 infrastructure supports traditional oil and gas operations and why it is important for American energy security?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you for that question.

Actually, few of the GPA Midstream members currently operate or are planning to operate CO_2 pipelines, but we recognize the importance of having the pipelines available to solve and support some of the environmental opportunities available in the industry.

We do support strong pipeline safety for all pipelines, including CO_2, and we would support PHMSA's process to establish those rules properly.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Are there risks associated with the CO_2 pipeline versus other pipelines if proper safety protocols are put in place?

Ms. MILLER. I am not—I would have to follow up for you, but I would be happy to.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. All right. Thank you so much.

I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California's 15th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all of our witnesses today. This is an incredibly important topic to my district.

Fifteen years ago, a natural gas pipeline exploded in the Glenview neighborhood of San Bruno, just a few miles from my home in south San Francisco. Eyewitnesses said that the fireball shot over 1,000 feet into the air. The blast killed 8 people, injured dozens more, and destroyed or damaged more than 100 homes. The impact on the community was devastating and long lasting, and it is exactly why we need to get this right.

An NTSB report concluded that "no one knew whether the pipeline under San Bruno was safe. Not the utility, not the State regulators, and not the Federal regulators." They went on to call it a failure of the entire system, a system of checks and balances that should have prevented this disaster.

So Mr. Caram, can you walk us through the root causes of the 2010 San Bruno explosion, specifically the organizational breakdowns and regulatory gaps that allowed such a catastrophe to occur?

Mr. CARAM. Well, I can do my best. It has been a little while since I have looked at that NTSB report. But seeing—I recognize we are coming up on 15 years in September, and my heart goes out to that community and your community.

There was a section of pipe up there that I don't think a lot of operators would consider pipe. And because of the lack of initial testing standards, you know, requiring to pressure test that pipe, it was never allowed to fail under that hydro test to discover that it wasn't capable of handling that pressure of natural gas. A lot of that came from acquisitions and lack of record keeping through acquisitions from company to company.

And so the NTSB report had a long list of recommendations on how operators could get to know their system to make sure that they would be able to identify if there were that kind of rogue pipe somewhere in their system susceptible to fail.

And PHMSA has—it took a long time, but they have enacted a series of rulemakings in response to those recommendations, and there are some real improvements in those regulations that they have passed. Unfortunately, because of the nonapplication clause and cost benefit, not all of the NTSB recommendations were able to be implemented by PHMSA, some of those key recommendations.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you for that.

So under the Trump administration, PHMSA's enforcement actions have dropped to record lows. And nearly all of the agency's senior career staff has left. The agency has also delayed publishing a rule on gas leaks.

Instead of prioritizing safety, unfortunately, the administration has proposed slashing budget by $16 million and threatened to

withhold funding from your organization, Mr. Caram, the Pipeline Safety Trust.

So given all of that, my question is to you again, sir: What does Congress need to do to ensure that pipelines are actually safer today than they were 15 years ago?

Mr. CARAM. I think Congress serves a critical oversight role of authorizing the appropriate level of funding, appropriating that funding, and then overseeing how they are implementing the Pipeline Safety Act. Hearings such as this can do that. Hearings with PHMSA would be helpful, as well.

Congress asked PHMSA to—in its oversight role asked PHMSA to produce a web chart showing its progress towards all of the mandates towards rulemaking and required that that be updated on a monthly basis. And I think that is a key piece of oversight. It is also key for members of the public to really see where those rulemakings are prioritized. And the last time I checked, that hadn't been updated since January.

Mr. MULLIN. I appreciate the renewed attention on this. Thank you all for your testimony.

And with that I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time, and the Chair now recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina's 7th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a fascinating hearing, and I really appreciate the witnesses for being here.

I am struck a little bit by some of the commentary from the other side of the dais that there is a perceived lack of enforcement. Mr. Black, earlier with—in a dialog with Mr. Pfluger you talked about two different sessions, if you will.

What did you mean by that? And could you expand upon that when it comes to enforcement?

Mr. BLACK. A couple of months ago, PHMSA's Office of Chief Counsel issued publicly a guidance on how this administration is going to be enforcing pipeline safety. Congress in the 2020 Act had said that more due process needed to be provided to respondents, and so that was part of it.

Before that series of memos from the Chief Counsel, there were public reports that numbers were down. Since then, the numbers of enforcement activities are higher. I don't think it is the numbers that matter to me. We look at, is PHMSA on the case on major incidents? Do pipeline operators recognize that PHMSA is going to deter unsafe pipeline operations? Pipeline operators absolutely know that PHMSA has that authority, and they are not thinking that this is—they are recognizing that we still face enforcement potential from PHMSA.

Mr. FRY. So you are not—maybe the Chicken Little exercise that we heard from the other side about the sky is falling, you—what you are saying is that you don't think that the current numbers substantiate that allegation.

Mr. BLACK. Correct. And I am not sure if numbers are the right way to do it. On the Keystone there was an action, there was a quick corrective action order telling the pipeline operator change its operations until PHMSA approved it. That is the type of activity PHMSA is supposed to do.

Mr. FRY. Mr. Black, who was the head of PHMSA under the Biden administration?

Mr. BLACK. It was Tristan Brown, the Deputy Administrator. There was no confirmed administrator.

Mr. FRY. Why is that?

Mr. BLACK. We don't know. In my time, there had never been an administration that failed to nominate an Administrator.

Mr. FRY. Well, I mean, we have all seen that the President, the former President, was kind of asleep at the wheel for most of his administration. So what you are saying is that there was no actual head. There was a Deputy Administrator, but no one that was nominated by the White House to be in the role.

Mr. BLACK. Correct.

Mr. FRY. Is that the same today, or is there an actual——

Mr. BLACK. There is a nominee, Paul Roberti, from the President to be the Senate-confirmed head of PHMSA, and he had his confirmation hearing last week. And we hope he is adopted. We think it is better for PHMSA to have Senate-confirmed leadership to be able to work with the Congress.

Mr. FRY. What is your understanding, Mr. Black, of the budget of PHMSA under the 2025 fiscal year? What do—do you know roughly what that number is?

Mr. BLACK. No, but I understand that the President's budget request is the same as it was in the last year.

Mr. FRY. Do you—would it—$280 million, does that sound about right——

Mr. BLACK. Yes, sir.

Mr. FRY [continuing]. For fiscal year 2025?

Mr. BLACK. Yes.

Mr. FRY. How much of an increase do you think that that is from, say, fiscal year 2023?

Mr. BLACK. I don't know.

Mr. FRY. Seventy-three million dollars.

Mr. BLACK. Right.

Mr. FRY. So you have seen a dramatic—so when we talk about scaling back funding or saving the taxpayers money, this isn't a scenario where their budget has been flat for years and they are receiving a cut. In fact, they received a 50 percent increase just 2 years prior to that.

So again, when we are talking about funding, I think it is important to understand the context of that funding and where these funding mechanisms came from. Do you agree?

Mr. BLACK. Yes. If we think PHMSA should be focused on pipeline safety, should have qualified personnel with STEM experience and pipeline operations expertise, if it takes Congress giving PHMSA extra help, we are ready to have them do that. We want PHMSA to have the resources that it needs.

Mr. FRY. To do the job of the original mission, perhaps.

Mr. BLACK. Focus on pipeline safety, yes.

Mr. FRY. Correct, not the other ancillary things. I mean, they have kind of become a de facto EPA, if you will, under at least the Biden administration.

Mr. BLACK. The emphasis was not there, right? There were congressional mandates, say, on idled pipe that were just not issued

during the last administration, and they bungled the implementation of the Pipeline Safety Technology Demonstration program. We hope that this PHMSA will be focused on the right things.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for that.

Ms. Miller, one example of PHMSA regulations not keeping pace with modern-day conditions is the class location regulations, which have been—which have not been updated in about 50 years.

Do you agree that population changes around pipelines necessitate changes to existing laws? And would those changes enhance pipeline safety?

Ms. MILLER. We believe that they are opportunities to ensure that risk assessments, including cross location analysis, is done to ensure that the right priorities are—and resources are made available for the highest priority safety results. So yes.

Mr. FRY. Thank you. PHMSA should also integrate efficiency and flexibility into the regulations to incentivize PHMSA to modernize. Would PHMSA integrating more integrity management principles into class location regulations elevate safety standards across more miles of pipelines?

Ms. MILLER. We believe it would. Performance-based measures across not only interstate pipelines but also for gathering and processing—I am sorry, gathering and local pipelines would matter, as well.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for that, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from California's 7th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the witnesses for being here today.

Now, the safe operation of our Nation's pipelines should be an urgent priority for this committee, but it has now been almost 2 years since its authorization expired for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

PHMSA is crucial for protecting communities from deadly pipeline accidents, but Republicans on this committee clearly don't see this as a priority. Instead of working towards a commonsense reauthorization of PHMSA, Republicans wasted the last 2 years trying to force through an extreme partisan bill that would cut pipeline safety by 18 percent.

Now, under President Trump, I am gravely concerned that pipeline safety has been caught in a broader Republican effort to roll back critical safety and pollution regulations across the Federal Government. As my colleagues have discussed, multiple senior officials at PHMSA resigned or having been pushed out of the agency. There has been a sharp decline, drop in the number of enforcement actions taken by PHMSA, and President Trump has rescinded critical pipeline safety rules.

Now, Mr. Caram, I want to keep this very simple. Are these actions going to increase or decrease the likelihood of a deeply—pipeline disaster?

Mr. CARAM. Thank you for that.

As I stated before, I believe strong regulations and effective enforcement are critical to pipeline safety, and actions that erode those, I fear, will hurt pipeline safety.

Ms. MATSUI. Exactly. Mr. Caram, this looks like a deliberate effort to cripple PHMSA's capacity to act as an effective safety regulator in order to benefit the oil and gas industry. Would you disagree?

Mr. CARAM. I can't speculate as to the motivations behind the actions.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. It is not just PHMSA. This is part of a pattern. EPA staff has been told not to enforce pollution rules. The Department of Energy has been ordered to stop enforcing efficiency standards. The Department of Labor has been ordered to stop enforcing antidiscrimination laws. This is a deliberate, coordinated effort to weaken the protections that keep us safe.

Now, I want to focus on the new rule for carbon dioxide pipelines for a moment because I think it demonstrates this point. As you mentioned in your testimony, it has now been 5 years since the CO_2 pipeline disaster in Mississippi that sent 45 people to the hospital. PHMSA proposed new rules to prevent this disaster from happening again, but President Trump immediately withdrew the new rule just as new CO_2 pipelines are being built across the country.

Mr. Caram, can you briefly describe some of the unique challenges and concerns surrounding the carbon dioxide pipelines?

Mr. CARAM. Sure. So CO_2 is an asphyxiate, and it is heavier than air, and it is usually transported in a pipeline in a dense phase. In the event of a pipeline rupture, large amounts of CO_2 can escape from the pipeline, and it can move in long distances close to the ground in dangerous and even lethal concentrations. It is odorless. It can be invisible, making it really difficult to detect. So all of these unique physical properties really present unique risks relative to other types of pipelines and unique emergency response challenges, as well.

Ms. MATSUI. But how do the proposed—the new proposed rules for CO_2 pipelines address these challenges?

Mr. CARAM. Well, it proposed new standards to ensure that ruptures would be less likely to occur, like stronger construction and design standards and real-time monitoring. It also made sure that all parts of the pipeline where a failure could affect a community would be subject to stricter safety standards, and it also made improvements to an operator's responsibility to ensure strong emergency response.

Ms. MATSUI. So does the President's decision to kill this rule make communities more safe or less safe?

Mr. CARAM. Well, if it is between finalizing the proposed rule or not modernizing the regulations, not modernizing the regulations makes——

Ms. MATSUI. So it would be less——

Mr. CARAM [continuing]. Makes communities less safe.

Ms. MATSUI. Less safe. Mr. Caram, without new safety rules, will we see another tragedy like the disaster in Mississippi?

Mr. CARAM. I certainly hope not. We will be relying on operators to follow voluntary industry standards instead of the law.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. Let me just talk about hydrogen blending. Blending hydrogen into natural gas pipelines also prevents new safety concerns that need to be addressed. Mr. Caram, can you

briefly describe some of the unique challenges and concerns with hydrogen blending?

Mr. CARAM. Sure——

Mr. LATTA. In about 5 seconds.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARAM. I am not sure I can do that in 5 seconds.

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Mr. LATTA. Could the lady submit the question to the witness?

Ms. MATSUI. I certainly could.

Mr. LATTA. In writing.

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you very much.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Florida's 15th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here with us today.

As American demand for energy continues to grow, it is essential that our pipeline infrastructure is prepared to meet this need. Pipelines are critical for transporting oil, natural gas, and our other energy resources.

My home State of Florida is a large producer of electricity and relies heavily on pipelines to deliver energy, so I appreciate your testimony and the discussion.

Mr. Moriarty, I would like to return to something you said just a few moments ago. You mentioned that one of the top risks you perceived for pipeline safety is, in fact, cybersecurity. Would you share with us a bit more about the cyber threat landscape you are seeing and how you are partnering with Federal agencies like the FBI and CISA to meet that threat?

Mr. MORIARTY. Thank you very much for the question.

I guess what I would say to start with is because of the cyber threat we took our SCADA system, which is responsible for the operation—safe operations of our systems, we took that off our corporate system and we put it into what we call a DMZ zone, which means nobody can get access to it. So even if there is a breach somewhere on our system, it won't get into the pipeline's safe operation.

Every day we have threats. We have a scoreboard where we see threats coming in in real time. Most—because of the investments we have made, most of those are stopped before they become a real threat. However, if there is a threat, it is sequestered and then is studied by our team. And then we report that to the various authorities—the FBI and others—and we have briefings constantly with the Federal partners to help us address this.

Ms. LEE. And Mr. Black, in your written testimony you recommended the authorization of a voluntary information-sharing program. In his confirmation hearing, PHMSA nominee Paul Roberti emphasized the importance of information sharing, specifically on cybersecurity.

Would you share with us more your perspective on that subject?

Mr. BLACK. We have a great opportunity to do for pipelines what FAA has done to improve safety in aviation. In the 2016 pipeline reauthorization law, Congress said PHMSA should form a public advisory—an advisory committee to come up with recommenda-

tions on how to develop this type of program. That work has been done, and it is ready for Congress to help authorize it.

The benefit would be that pipeline operators, safety advocates, and government could all talk about incidents and lessons in a safe space so we are not concerned about antitrust violations, we are not concerned about the information getting out into the wrong hands. It has really been successful in aviation, where pilots, machinists, anybody is able to get that information with the focus on improving pipeline safety.

So if Congress can enact voluntary information-sharing systems similar to what the advisory committee done—did, we will be able to do that type of a program that the NTSB and others will be cheering us on.

Ms. LEE. And I think it is important to explore something you just touched on, which is the concept of being able to share that kind of information in a safe space. Would you elaborate a little bit more on the types of things that can happen if we don't create an environment like that —for example, the information falling into the wrong hands—and how that can exacerbate a vulnerability?

Or, you know, the other potential consequences you face if we don't have a clear framework for sharing that kind of risk or even breach or incident information.

Mr. BLACK. So pipeline operators themselves maintain a lot of different programs for sharing information. We want to learn from an incident and get better across the entire industry.

But there is a limitation right now in being able to have that discussion with government or to have the Pipeline Safety Trust in the room. You want pipeline operators to—and anybody in the industry to be able to contribute that information and understand that that is going to be considered confidentially, it is not going to be misused against you in enforcement. There should be enforcement cases going on, but nothing in here should invoke that so that we can do safety.

Right now, government isn't allowed to be a part of those discussions right now because they would have to put that information out on the street if asked. It has been successful in aviation. Let's do it for pipelines.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the balance of her time. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York's 20th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome to our panelists.

While I hope we can reach consensus on a bipartisan pipeline safety reauthorization, I have my doubts because recent history has shown that Republicans never miss an opportunity to promote fossil fuel industry interests. And we failed to reach agreement on a bipartisan bill last Congress, unlike our colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, because Republicans couldn't help themselves but to include extraneous provisions intended to promote oil and gas.

And that dedication to fossil fuels led President Trump and congressional Republicans to end critical tax credits for fossil fuels' biggest competitors: renewables in the electricity sector and EVs in the transportation sector. This happened despite the fact that nu-

merous independent analyses found that the Republicans' proposal will raise America's energy bills by more than $100 annually in the near term, growing to more than $400 within a decade.

So during our last markup of energy bills, members of the majority continue to invoke the Keystone XL Pipeline, suggesting that the Obama and Biden administrations killed jobs. But after the Big, Ugly Bill, it has become crystal clear who actually cares about American energy jobs. Don't take my word for it, listen to the people who construct both renewable and pipeline projects. North America's building trades unions call the Republicans' Big, Ugly Bill—and I quote—"the biggest job-killing bill in the history of this country." It is the equivalent of terminating more than 1,000 Keystone XL Pipeline projects.

So all of these years later, Republicans want to continue to relitigate Keystone while enacting a bill that will kill an estimated 1.75 million construction jobs, translating to $148 billion in lost annual wages and benefits for American workers.

But, Mr. Caram, I want to try to highlight a couple of issues at PHMSA that may affect its ability to ensure safe operations of pipeline infrastructure. Your testimony noted that insufficient resources have resulted in PHMSA lacking technical capabilities, causing the agency to be overly reliant on regulated entities' technical expertise to carry out its responsibilities. This is an extremely troubling trend being implemented across many agencies by the Trump administration.

Starving important, lifesaving regulatory agencies of skilled personnel and resources is a surefire way to allow corporate entities to cut corners at the expense of everyday Americans and our collective public interests. We are seeing this playbook be executed right now as the Trump administration works to eliminate EPA's Office of Research and Development and lay off hundreds of chemists, toxicologists, and other scientists.

And that is because these public servants produce independent science that regulated industries often don't like. Polluters want their regulators to be toothless, to rely upon them for science, and to lack the capacity to verify industry-produced studies, or enforce rules.

So Mr. Caram, I think you might suggest that there has been an historic funding challenge at PHMSA, limiting its ability to be an effective, independent safety regulator.

But do you have a sense of whether things will get better or worse if Congress further reduces PHMSA funding authorization levels as was proposed by committee Republicans just a few years ago?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, I would have to imagine they would get worse.

Mr. TONKO. So I thank you for that, and I want to highlight another disturbing trend being advanced by the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress.

Between the ongoing appropriations process and the Big, Ugly Bill, Federal budget cuts are pushing more and more costs onto State governments, which will require States to fill funding gaps or be forced to cut benefits and services.

So, Mr. Caram, am I correct that States are partners in the effort to conduct inspections and oversight of pipelines?

Mr. CARAM. Yes. The vast majority of the pipeline mileage in this country are under State jurisdiction for inspections and enforcement.

Mr. TONKO. And if that commitment by the Feds is reduced, what happens to the States?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, State programs, as we have heard throughout this hearing, are in need of that funding. They can get up to 80 percent of their pipeline safety program reimbursed by Federal funds through that State grant program. And historically, they have not come close to that 80 percent.

Mr. TONKO. So if States are unwilling or unable to cover more of the costs to be effective partners, will that make Americans more or less safe from potential pipeline risks?

Mr. CARAM. I would imagine safe—less safe.

Mr. TONKO. Less safe, so not an outcome that we should all be working towards. So if we can avoid that, we should do our best to do so.

With that, I thank you and I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the balance of his time. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio's 6th District for 5 minutes for questions.

[Pause.]

Mr. RULLI. I am pretty loud. I will just speak.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My attention will be directed at Andy Black.

I hope you are doing well today. So thank you for your support in liquid energy. I really appreciate that. My district really much relies on it. So several points of focus on how safe pipelines could actually make the Ohio 6th a better place to live is we are—now have a project of a cracker plant which will mimic the Monaca cracker plant, which is across the border in Pennsylvania.

It is a $12.5 billion project. A lot of union jobs will be building that. It is very exciting. It is going to crack the gas into butane, propane, heavy gas, liquid gas, all kinds of exciting things.

In the Ohio Senate I was instrumental in building three gas-powered generating plants. It was a thrill of mine. We right now have about $40 billion worth of potential investors that are going to come to the Ohio 6th, and we are going to build 6 or 7 more of these. And so what is going to happen is the Ohio Senate right now has Senate Bill 2, which is the energy bill, which is going to direct State money to coexist with Federal money as a united force to developing energy.

Data centers are coming up, AI advancement centers are coming up, and general manufacturing is coming all along the Ohio River. Pipelines support this industry and sometimes run through the—our neighborhoods, and they need to be safe.

One of the most exciting things is the evolution of the pipelines that I have seen in my career. And the development of what you call the smart pipeline, which I think most of the public is ignorant on—smart pipelines actually allow for a safer progress of moving gas around through these neighborhoods.

The Liquid and Gas Pipeline Advisory Committees were created decades ago with the help of PHMSA on safety rulemaking and pol-

icy development. What is your personal perspective on the value of these advisory committees and their existence with safe pipelines?

Mr. BLACK. Well, the project that you mentioned in Ohio and those in the Marcellus are great, wonderful examples to create jobs, to benefit, and to not have to take it all down to the Gulf Coast, right? So it is great for our country to have that flexibility.

The advisory committees were created by Congress to make regulations better, right? Any proposal that PHMSA has needs to go to the gas or liquid or sometimes both, and that can make for a good exchange on helping people understand how a regulation should be modified to be more feasible, practical, economical.

So it is good that we have those advisory committees, and we would look forward to future regulations going there.

Mr. RULLI. I think that is really exciting. I think that making these committees even more strong is really what the exciting part is. Right now these committees are meeting four times a year. In your personal opinion, do you think that needs to happen more frequently?

And what better ways can we put to have guardrails inside these committees to have more safety, more rulemaking, more compliance to industry so the industry becomes a safer process?

Mr. BLACK. I know some of my gas colleagues believe it is important to have a certain number of advisory committees. To me, quality is more important than quantity. Let's make sure those advisory committee members are up to speed, not just on regulation but also on technological developments, so that everybody understands what the latest possibilities are. That may take more meetings.

Mr. RULLI. Do you think it is possible that we could take the political bent away from these advisory committees so it could be more of a bipartisan approach where everyone's voice could actually be represented in the committee, and nobody would feel left out or threatened to be part of this process?

Mr. BLACK. Yes, they are constructed that way, and they should be. Yes, sir.

Mr. RULLI. Well, I thank you so much for your thoughts on this.

And with that, Chair, I yield my time.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you. The gentleman yields his time back, and the Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from New York's 14th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Caram, I want to touch on something that you mentioned in your written testimony, which is that pipeline safety law currently prevents the Pipeline Hazardous Material Safety Administration, or PHMSA, which we are discussing today, from imposing safety regulations on existing pipelines. And that was, frankly, shocking to me. It means that it will be a monumental task to make the existing 3.3 million miles of pipelines in our communities safer.

Can you talk about how this requirement prevents us from making the most dangerous pipelines in America safer?

And should we look at altering that requirement in any reauthorization of PHMSA?

Mr. CARAM. Yes, thank you for that question. The Pipeline Safety Act passed by Congress has a section in it, a provision, where it says that the design—any design, construction, or initial testing

standards adopted by PHMSA cannot apply to existing pipelines, only new and replaced pipelines.

So, you know, operational regulations and things like that can apply to existing pipelines, but those, you know, initial testing design and construction standards cannot. And what that means in practice is that PHMSA has been unable to make certain lifesaving regulatory changes, including those recommended by the NTSB after tragedies like San Bruno, like requiring rupture mitigation valves in high-consequence areas that we know would save lives.

So in practice this permanently exempts about half of the Nation's pipelines from—and including those at the highest risk—from meeting critical modern safety standards.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Caram. And as you mentioned, it is important to highlight something that—you said half of pipelines in the U.S. are essentially blocked from having these additional safety standards for communities and workers on them—in—and being updated to be safer.

Ms. Miller, you represent an association of pipeline companies. And I see here in your testimony that it states that your members "appreciate improved due process" for companies that violate the laws as a priority. I want to discuss the consequences for pipeline companies when they fail to follow the law and PHMSA's rules.

Just over 5 years ago, an employee of Energy Transfer, a pipeline company and a member of your organization, was killed while conducting maintenance activities on a gas pipeline in Kansas. This employee was attempting to remove an object that had become stuck due to ice in a partly pressurized pipeline. Now, PHMSA's rules require operators to completely depressurize pipelines before working on them. But this worker was attempting to remove the object using a steel rod. When the object became dislodged, and due to remaining pressure in the pipeline—struck him in the abdomen and killed him.

Now, Energy Transfer is in court, arguing that it should not be held to account for the fact that it did not follow PHMSA's rules. Mr. Chair, I seek unanimous consent to enter into the record a complaint brought by the Attorney General in the Northern District Court of Texas.

Mr. LATTA. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. This complaint states that "PHMSA's investigation indicates that Energy Transfer failed to follow its manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities at the border station in connection with this fatal incident."

Someone died. Now one of the biggest companies in the industry, Energy Transfer, is in court arguing that PHMSA shouldn't be able to hold any company that violates its rules responsible.

Ms. Miller, you mentioned due process for companies that violate laws in your testimony as a priority. In your opinion, if a pipeline company does not follow the rules and a worker is killed, should PHMSA be able to hold that company responsible?

Ms. MILLER. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. I would say that any specific questions about energy transfers and litigation, I would have to defer to them. But for GPA Midstream

members, generally speaking, we do encourage that our members are able to rely on a strong enforcement protocol and that it is executed in a way that is transparent and complies with law, due process being part of that, to ensure that they are—that there are——

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. I apologize. I only have 15 seconds left. Should PHMSA be able to hold the companies responsible?

Ms. MILLER. We do believe that PHMSA should be a strong enforcement agency and equitably apply its rules across the industry.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK, great. So they should be able to hold these companies responsible, and yet we are in an environment where the Trump administration and their enforcement actions against pipeline companies——

Mr. LATTA. I am sorry, the gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Sure, thank you. Thank you.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Colorado's 8th District for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member. Of course, also to our witnesses for coming.

Again, you heard Colorado's 8th congressional district, so we have got 80 percent of the oil, 50 percent of the natural gas in Colorado. That is from the hole in the ground, through midstream, through—we have got the only refinery in Colorado, and then final distribution to the end users. And so a lot of that, obviously, happens through pipelines.

And we know, you know, we have heard in the commentary today, pipelines—safest way to move this liquid energy around in terms of accidents.

I want to make sure we also highlight the emissions. We had an incident in Colorado where some of our—some of that local distribution that relies on the pipelines went down during a really, really hard freeze. And so to backfill all of that energy that couldn't be transported via pipeline for a few months, it was thousands and thousands of trucks keeping the Denver metro area going in the dead of winter. We have talked, obviously, about the—you know, the wear and tear that that has on the roadway and traffic safety when you have that massive increase of vehicles.

But I want to make sure that the emissions component of that isn't lost when we are talking about the climate and the fact that pipelines are, again, one of the lowest-emission sources—ways of moving some of this energy around. They alleviate that critical demand on our electrical infrastructure because backfilling, you know, in my area, all of the heat that comes from natural gas combustion, which is what heats a lot of homes in my area, backfilling that with electrical demand is incredibly difficult and challenging and costly to a lot of our consumers in Colorado.

We have, unfortunately, seen a first-in-the-Nation mandated—a so-called beneficial electrification plan for a major utility in Colorado mandating that, even though they are not an electrical provider—they do natural gas distribution to customers—they have to have this so-called beneficial electrical plan, which is raising costs for consumers by dropping those heavyhanded mandates on consumers who want energy choice and want to be able to choose what works best for them, their family, and their budget.

So my first question will be to Mr. Moriarty. Can you just talk a little bit about the impact to consumers and to consumers' pocketbooks from that utility perspective with the current program that we have of making sure that our pipelines are regulated, that, as we have heard, the safest way to move this energy around, but can we—can you talk a little bit about the impact to the customers if we were to take a different path and have more regulatory burden on pipelines?

Mr. MORIARTY. Well, thank you for that question.

All the costs that go in to delivering energy are recovered from our customers through State commission rate proceedings. One way that we have avoided higher costs is to construct LNG storage facilities to meet peak day demand.

So you were talking about freeze-offs. We would have an LNG storage facility that would be available. We have one in Florida, as well as one now we are building on Delmarva.

Mr. EVANS. Yes, thank you for that. And then the next question will be to Mr. Black.

Obviously, pipeline safety, top of mind for everybody. We have talked a lot about it. And so I just want this to be our—I think our final thought for this hearing here. We need an empowered entity to step up and take action against bad actors that put the public safety at risk. And so that is why I was glad to see that PHMSA announced revisions to its pipeline safety enforcement actions last month to improve transparency and fairness.

And so can you just comment on those changes, how they alter the enforcement dynamics for operators?

And just talk a little bit about the evidentiary record process, as well.

Mr. BLACK. Congress has recognized there are failings in how PHMSA has managed its administrative enforcement program. In the 2020 PIPES Act, Congress mandated that PHMSA improve its procedures, including making the case file available to a respondent in a case. Then PHMSA in the last administration failed to do that. It happened episodically sometimes, not others, and it wasn't really codified in regulations.

And so PHMSA has—it now in the last month, as you say, improved that. It is a level playing field, and that is all pipeline operators are asking for—due process when PHMSA exerts its administrative enforcement program—because pipeline operators know that PHMSA needs to be active and deter unsafe operations, and give Congress and the American public confidence that they are on that case, making sure that we have a safe network.

Mr. EVANS. Well, with our final 24 seconds, I guess I will just close with I think we have heard safety is top of mind in this space. We have that record of safety. We have that record of being responsible toward the climate, because this is one of the lowest-emission ways to move energy around. It is cost effective for consumers. And then, in my district, this provides high-quality jobs for a high-quality workforce that maintain these pipelines.

And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LATTA. Right on the button. Thank you very much.

Seeing no further Members wishing to be recognized to ask questions to our witnesses, I want to thank you all for appearing before us for today.

Members have additional written questions that may be for you, and I will remind Members that they have 10 business days to submit additional questions for the record, and I ask that the witness do their best to submit their response within 10 business days upon the receipt of the questions.

I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the documents included on the staff hearing documents list.

And without objection, that is so ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. LATTA. And again I want to thank our witnesses.

And Mr. Black, welcome back, having been a former staffer here on the committee.

Also, this is the last hearing that we will have in this room until it is our—I guess we might say worked on. We have had a little bit of issues in this room through the years, but we really appreciate you being here.

Without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:22 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
"Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy."
July 22, 2025
Documents for the Record

1. A letter from the American Public Gas Association addressed to Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta, and Ranking Member Castor, submitted by the Majority.
2. A letter from the American Petroleum Institute addressed to Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta, and Ranking Member Castor, submitted by the Majority.
3. A court document from the District Court for the Northern District of Texas Dallas Division, submitted by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

AMERICAN PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Energy Hearing On "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy"

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta, and Ranking Member Castor:

On behalf of the American Public Gas Association (APGA)[1] and the nearly 1,000 community-owned natural gas systems operating in 38 states across the country, we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for the important matter of improving pipeline safety and the reauthorization of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

APGA's members include not-for-profit gas distribution systems owned by municipalities and other local government entities, all directly accountable to the citizens they serve. Public gas systems are committed to safely providing efficient, reliable, and affordable energy to their customers. They support their communities by delivering energy for cooking, clothes drying, and space and water heating in homes and businesses. Natural gas utilities also serve as a conduit for economic development and well-being, as they provide a vital fuel source for various commercial and industrial applications. The decisions made by Congress on PHMSA's reauthorization will have a direct impact on our members' ability to maintain and improve upon the safe delivery of natural gas to the customers and communities they serve.

Safety is Paramount

Safety is, and always has been, the top priority for APGA members. Public gas systems work diligently to operate and maintain their infrastructure in ways that minimize the likelihood of incidents and protect people and property. Our members' commitment to safety begins with our employees, the utility professionals who live in the communities they serve, and it extends to every mile of pipe that delivers gas to customers. These systems have invested significantly in

[1] American Public Gas Association <apga.org>

replacing aging infrastructure, deploying advanced leak detection technology, training personnel, and participating in rigorous emergency preparedness programs.

Distribution Integrity Management Programs (DIMP) play a critical role in ensuring that natural gas distribution systems understand their unique risks and manage them accordingly. These risk-based programs, subject to regular audits by state regulators or PHMSA, guide utilities in prioritizing actions that reduce risk (such as pipeline replacement or more frequent inspections of their system). These actions, that go above and beyond the prescriptive requirements of federal regulations, also improve system resiliency and help prevent pipeline incidents. Public gas systems have also been leaders in promoting a culture of safety within their organizations, aligning with voluntary industry-wide efforts like Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS) to drive continuous improvement.

The industry's proactive safety measures have yielded meaningful results. Over the last two decades, significant incidents in natural gas distribution systems have declined by more than 40%[2], even as the number of natural gas customers and pipeline mileage have grown. But the industry's work toward a safer future is never done, as any single incident requires reflection and action. Our members are committed to working with Congress, PHMSA, and state pipeline safety partners to further reduce risks, modernize infrastructure, and ensure public confidence in their systems.

Support for a Well-Resourced PHMSA

The continued success of our nation's pipeline safety efforts depends, in part, on a strong, well-resourced federal regulator. Since its creation, PHMSA has demonstrated a clear commitment to safety and transparency in its work with pipeline operators, state regulators, and other stakeholders. APGA supports reauthorizing PHMSA for a five-year term, consistent with the historical reauthorization timeline that enables the agency to implement congressional mandates, conduct studies, and ensure continuity in its mission.

We also urge Congress to maintain robust funding for state pipeline safety enforcement programs through PHMSA's grant office. State authorities serve as the primary enforcers for most natural gas distribution pipeline operators, and these grants are critical to ensuring that local regulators have the tools and personnel needed to perform inspections and enforce safety standards. Supporting PHMSA's core functions helps reduce uncertainty and promote operational stability for natural gas operators.

Excavation Damage Prevention

Excavation damage remains the leading cause of serious incidents on distribution pipelines. These incidents are often preventable, and all too often result from failure to follow established safe digging practices. APGA strongly supports state legislative efforts to strengthen enforcement of One-Call laws and incentivize the adoption of leading practices to reduce excavation-related damages. However, improving excavation safety will require a shared commitment among

[2] American Gas Association <www.aga.org>

excavators – including homeowners, all underground utility operators, and regulators. APGA urges Congress to direct PHMSA to work collaboratively with states to ensure that damage prevention programs are effective, transparent, and enforceable. Every effort to reduce excavation damage is an investment in public safety.

Extending the Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization (NGDISM) Grant Program

APGA appreciates Congress' creation of the NGDISM Grant Program in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This program provides critical funding for publicly- and community-owned utilities to repair, rehabilitate, or replace aging pipeline infrastructure and purchase equipment that enhances leak detection and system safety.

Now entering its fourth of five funding cycles, the NGDISM program has earned a proven track record of success. The program has so far awarded over $800 million in funding to 128 community-owned gas systems across the country. Publicly-owned utilities that have received grants are using those funds to replace aging, leak-prone pipes, upgrade critical infrastructure, and enhance safety in neighborhoods across the country. These are the systems that operate the pipelines running beneath roads to your schools, hospitals, and homes- the pipes closest to the heart of your communities. By investing in these local systems, the program not only reduces safety risks but also helps keep energy affordable. Because public utilities are not-for-profit, every dollar saved through infrastructure investment directly benefits customers in the form of lower energy bills and more reliable service.

We urge Congress to extend this program as part of the PHMSA reauthorization. The NGDISM program addresses a clear need among the smallest public utilities, many of which face challenges accessing capital for infrastructure modernization. These grants enhance public safety while supporting affordability and reliability for consumers.

Finalizing Congressionally Mandated Rulemakings

APGA supports the timely completion of rulemakings mandated by previous reauthorizations, provided that the resulting regulations are grounded in practical, outcomes-based approaches. We specifically encourage PHMSA to finalize the Leak Detection and Repair (LDAR) rule in a manner that recognizes the diversity of distribution systems and avoids prescriptive, one-size-fits-all requirements. For example, APGA members support the identification and repair of leaks; however, APGA does not believe it is beneficial for pipeline safety that each of the more than 2,000 natural gas distribution operators be required to perform a review of all state-of-the-art technologies on a routine basis. This exercise would be a distraction from the physical work that is so critical to pipeline safety.

Utilities must be empowered to use the tools and technologies that best suit their systems and communities. Effective regulation should focus on measurable improvements in safety and performance, not compliance with rigid procedures that may not yield better outcomes. APGA stands ready to work with Congress and PHMSA to ensure that final rules achieve their intended safety goals while being practical to implement.

Protecting and Advancing Natural Gas Infrastructure

Public gas systems face growing challenges with the infrastructure they operate and maintain. We are increasingly concerned by efforts to restrict access to natural gas or to discourage investment in gas distribution networks. As policymakers consider the future of energy, it is essential to recognize the value of existing infrastructure and its increasingly more efficient delivery of affordable and reliable energy to millions of Americans.

Congress should take steps to enhance penalties for intentional damage to pipeline facilities. Acts of vandalism or sabotage pose serious threats to public safety and energy reliability and must be deterred through strong enforcement.

At the same time, it is critical to ensure that there is adequate pipeline capacity to meet growing energy needs. In many parts of the country, including the Northeast and middle America, constraints on infrastructure have led to waitlists for service and overreliance on higher-emission alternatives. We urge Congress to support policies that streamline permitting for needed pipeline expansion and modernization.

Conclusion

In closing, APGA's members are committed to safely delivering reliable and affordable natural gas to the communities they serve. We value the strong working relationship we have with PHMSA and support a thoughtful, bipartisan reauthorization that advances our shared safety mission.

Thank you again for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee on behalf of public gas utilities and the Americans who rely on them every day for their energy needs.

Sincerely,

Erin Kurilla
Executive Vice President, Vice President of Advocacy and Operations
American Public Gas Association

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Subcommittee on Energy

Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy

Letter from the American Petroleum Institute

July 22, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Latta
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Latta, and Ranking Member Castor:

Chairman Latta, Vice Chairman Weber, Ranking Member Castor and esteemed members of the subcommittee: my name is Robin Rorick, and I am the Vice President of Midstream Policy at the American Petroleum Institute (API). On behalf of API, we appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter as part of this important hearing addressing pipeline safety and the reauthorization of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

API represents all segments of America's oil and natural gas industry. From large integrated companies to small independent operators, 11 million hardworking men and women across all 50 states provide and support the energy that powers every district in this nation.[1] Our nearly 600 members produce, process, and distribute the majority of the nation's energy and participate in the API Energy Excellence® program, which is accelerating environmental and safety progress by fostering new technologies and transparent reporting. API was formed in 1919 as a standards-setting organization and has developed more than 800

[1] PwC for API, "Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the US Economy in 2021," available at: https://www.api.org/-/media/Files/Policy/American-Energy/PwC/2023/API-PWC-Economic-Impact-Report-2023.pdf

standards that enhance operational safety, environmental protection and sustainability across 140 countries. Promoting technological, environmental and regulatory innovations is a driving force for API and our industry to ensure we have safe, reliable and affordable energy that tens of millions of families and businesses need to survive and thrive, today and well into the future.

Our country is the world's leader in oil and natural gas production, benefitting Americans here at home as well as our allies across the world.[2] Pipelines make these capabilities a reality, playing a critical role in achieving the goals of energy dominance and energy security. We operate a network of over 500,000 miles of oil, petroleum products and natural gas transmission pipelines every day, transporting the energy we rely on to fuel modern life. Pipelines are one of the safest, most environmentally responsible ways to transport energy and are located in every U.S. state and Congressional district. They provide the transportation fuels for cars, trucks and airplanes, home heating products, feedstocks for household goods, pharmaceuticals and medical products, the basis for pesticides and herbicides, and energy for power generation.

Commitment to Safety

We are committed to safety and continuous improvement, which includes maintaining a standard of operational excellence through comprehensive safety management systems, pipeline design and construction standards, and robust safety programs such as integrity management and geohazard mitigation. Data from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) shows that this commitment is working. Both total liquid pipeline incidents as well as those impacting people or the environment (IPE) decreased 13% between 2020 and 2024.[3] Looking further, integrity management IPE incidents for liquid pipelines dropped 33%, and operations and maintenance IPE incidents declined 22% within this time. These safety improvements come as the industry operated 3,000 more miles of liquid pipeline and delivered over 15% more barrels of liquid energy between 2019 and 2023, the most recent year this data is available. In fact, the rate of total incidents per million barrels of energy delivered has fallen 33% since 2019, showing that liquid pipelines are getting safer while meeting increasing energy demand. Natural gas transmission lines are showing similar safety improvements, with incidents down 23% between 2020 and 2024.

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[2] "API | Industry Explained – Oil Production & Natural Gas Production", available at: https://www.api.org/products-and-services/statistics/industry-explained

[3] "2024 Pipeline Performance Report & 2023-2025 Pipeline Excellence Strategic Plan," available at API/LEPA 2024 Performance Report

Pipeline operators recognize the need for continuous improvement despite this progress. Our industry continues to implement safety management systems to comprehensively manage risk, mitigate pipeline corrosion, improve leak detection technology, prevent cyberattacks and promote sustainable operations using conservation programs. Following the publication in 2024 of a first-of-its-kind industry standard on public engagement, Recommended Practice (RP) 1185, pipeline operators are actively implementing programs that foster meaningful, two-way communication and build trust within the communities where we work and live. Additionally, we are working on the safe transportation of CO_2 by pipeline through the publication of a new RP this year.

As part of our efforts to promote pipeline safety improvements, API has responded to a recent U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Request for Information and several PHMSA Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemakings (ANPRMs) seeking comments to modernize regulatory frameworks, improve safety and reduce regulatory burdens on pipeline operators. Our response identified numerous opportunities for updating outdated and inefficient regulations so that they reflect the current state of technology, engineering science and advanced analytical tools, focus resources on the highest risk items, and support a performance-based approach to managing pipeline safety. API applauds PHMSA for the proactive regulatory actions taken to date to revise severely outdated liquified natural gas facility safety requirements, modernize repair criteria, update federal pipeline regulations and reduce regulatory burdens that will help ensure the President's agenda for unleashing America's energy is done safely.

The reshoring of advanced manufacturing in the U.S., data center operations and artificial intelligence utilization are increasing energy demand, placing this industry at an inflection point. This time is an opportunity to demonstrate American energy leadership and meet growing demand while benefiting local communities and global allies using rational, predictable and commonsense energy policies.

Support for the Pipeline Safety, Modernization, and Expansion Act of 2023

API supports this committee's efforts to develop a comprehensive PHMSA reauthorization and prior published bill, *Pipeline Safety, Modernization and Expansion Act of 2023*. We applaud legislation that maximizes our industry's investments in people and technology to effectively advance pipeline safety.

This committee's bill will make important strides in improving pipeline safety. It will ensure that a technology pilot program functions as Congress originally intended, allowing operators to leverage state-of-the-art technology to advance pipeline safety. It will also help improve pipeline safety through the

creation of a voluntary information-sharing system operators can use to gather incident data and share lessons learned in a confidential, protected environment. The act also strengthens protections for pipeline infrastructure by criminalizing activities that impair the operation or construction of facilities, cause damage that could result in harm to people, the environment and the pipeline itself or disrupt critical energy supply. Importantly, the bill maintains and strengthens PHMSA's critical cost-benefit analysis provision and recognizes the importance of regulatory updates in further strengthening the regulatory framework around the transportation of carbon dioxide by pipeline.

The Pipeline Safety, Modernization and Expansion Act of 2023 goes beyond reauthorizing pipeline safety programs, recognizing the link between pipeline safety and a functional permitting system that allows for effective investment in maintaining and expanding critical pipeline infrastructure. Meaningful and durable permitting reform is critical to fully unleash American energy leadership and showcase energy dominance. Any legislative remedy related to permitting should be based on transparency, predictability, timeliness, efficiency and judicial durability. Permitting challenges have caused delays in critical infrastructure, stymied investment, or resulted in the cancellation of projects altogether. While permitting reform is a complex issue, cutting across multiple statutes, federal and state agencies and Congressional committees, now is the time for action. As rightly noted by the committee, permitting for modification, expansion, inspection, repair or maintenance of existing pipeline facilities are often overlooked but are no less critical to our energy supply chain than new facilities.

The committee's proposal also reflects an important opportunity to modernize the permitting system by making it easier for operators to co-locate resources in existing rights-of-way. API members have been doing this successfully for years – placing new pipelines or related infrastructure like compressor stations in the same rights-of-way used for existing pipelines. This allows operators to expand our capacity to transport energy products while also minimizing our impact on nearby communities and the environment. We are grateful the committee recognizes the value in modernizing permits for such projects, understanding that it would place additional pressure on federal agencies to meet their statutory deadlines for approving permits and could bring valuable accountability to the system.

The proposed bill strengthens critical cost-benefit requirements for federal rulemakings by clarifying that the costs and benefits considered during the rulemaking process should be limited to those within the United States. This provision to conduct reasoned cost-benefit analysis supports effective and efficient regulations that achieve their Congressional directives without placing undue or debilitating burdens on

complying industries. It ensures that the benefits of a regulation justify its costs and is consistent with the principles established in longstanding Executive Orders that apply to the rulemaking process.

The cost-benefit analysis helps PHMSA and stakeholders compare the multiple, feasible alternatives to identify the best option during the public comment and advisory committee review processes.[4] It makes for more effective rulemakings that target specific pipeline safety needs rather than overly broad or restrictive ones. This good government provision was first enacted by a Democratic Congress at the direction of a Democratic President. Congress has placed similar requirements on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Mine Health and Safety Administration and Environmental Protection Agency, recognizing the value in requiring agencies to review both costs and benefits as part of the rulemaking process.

Additional Provisions for Safety and Economic Growth

This legislation is a strong starting point, and we also encourage this committee to consider additional provisions to improve pipeline safety. Although PHMSA has begun to address some of these issues through rulemaking, to ensure the durability of key regulatory change we are also encouraging the committee to consider the inclusion of provisions associated with requiring timely review of industry standards incorporated by reference, acknowledging alternative approaches for maintaining pipeline rights-of-way, clarifying a regulatory gray area related to in-plant piping, strengthening state damage prevention practices and enforcement, removing exemptions and increasing participation in One Call Centers.

Additionally, we are encouraged by PHMSA's interest in the potential inclusion for the allowance of risk-based inspections for break-out tanks in the repair criteria ANPRM, but here once more we would

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[4] A recent decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit highlights the continued importance of the risk assessment requirements that Congress added to the Pipeline Safety Act. *GPA Midstream Ass'n v. United States Dep't of Transp.*, 67 F.4th 1188 (D.C. Cir. 2023). In concluding that PHMSA failed to comply with these requirements in issuing a final rule that would have required the installation of rupture-mitigation valves on gathering lines, the Court explained that PHMSA "said nothing about the practicability or the costs and benefits of regulating the gathering sector of the pipeline industry" in its preliminary risk assessment, and issued the final rule without allowing the public or the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee to review and provide comment on that information. *Id.* at 1197. The Court concluded that in so doing, PHMSA "flouted the pipeline safety laws and a cardinal rule of administrative law." *Id.* at 1198. The Court also found that PHMSA did not engage in reasoned decision making in issuing the final rule because the final risk assessment did not demonstrate that the benefits of the regulations for gathering lines justified their costs. The Court explained that PHMSA did not consider relevant differences between gathering and transmission lines in preparing that assessment, failed to quantify any of the benefits, and relied on a technical study that did not address the installation of rupture mitigation valves on gathering lines. In short, the Court found that in issuing the regulations for gathering lines PHMSA "cut corners to the prejudice of the petitioners, the administrative process, and thus the public." *Id.* at 1202.

support the development of statutory language to ensure long-term durability. Current regulations cite outdated industry practices, requiring internal inspections to be conducted more often than necessary to maintain them safely. It unnecessarily puts workers in harm's way, generates emissions and fails to reflect leading industry approaches. Today, operators are investing in the latest tank coatings and liners, using advanced materials engineering principles to reduce risks and employing UAS and robotics for inspections.

API has been the leader in developing voluntary, consensus-based oil and natural gas industry standards since 1924. Our standards are the most widely cited petroleum industry standards by regulators, with 240 API standards cited over 3,800 times in state-based regulations and more than 650 references in federal regulations.[5] These standards are reviewed every five years at a minimum through API's American National Standards Institute-accredited process, although regulators struggle to keep pace with the advances in pipeline safety technology and modern engineering practices that are regularly incorporated into these standards. Today, approximately 50 percent of the instances where PHMSA cites API standards are out of date and do not reference the most recent edition. Thus, critical regulations do not reflect advances in safety, technology and engineering, forcing pipeline operators to comply with often antiquated practices. This committee should require that PHMSA review references to standards that have been incorporated every three years through the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee and Liquid Pipeline Advisory Committee processes to determine if updates are needed. If PHMSA chooses to ignore an updated standard, the agency should publish an explanation of this decision on its website.

Additionally, API supports language clarifying jurisdiction over short segments of pipe within gas processing and refining facilities known as "in-plant" piping. These pipelines are operated by plant personnel, run between facilities and are less than one mile in length. Liquid in-plant piping is regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) through its Process Safety Management program as directed by Congress. However, no similar instructions exist when it comes to natural gas in-plant piping. Historically, PHMSA has deferred to OSHA as the primary regulator, but the lack of statutory clarity has created a vacuum that certain regional PHMSA offices have tried to exploit to expand their jurisdiction. This regulatory gray area has led to confusion among pipeline operators and thus requires regulatory certainty. We recommend committee action here to address natural gas in-plant piping the same way as liquid lines and to clarify OSHA's jurisdiction while still maintaining the same safety levels.

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[5] OGP Report No. 426, Regulators' Use of Standards, March 2010

Safely Demonstrating Energy Leadership

The U.S. is leading the world in both oil and natural gas production. For America to demonstrate true energy leadership with its abundant natural resources, Congress must enact pipeline safety policy that is fit-for-purpose and based on sound science and engineering principles. Pipelines are an essential cog in the energy supply chain. They have enabled our country's record-breaking energy production by transporting oil, refined products, low carbon energy sources and natural gas in one of the safest and most environmentally friendly modes possible. We remain committed to continual safety improvements to meet the shared goal of zero incidents.

Pipeline safety is not a partisan issue, and API is eager to partner with legislators and regulators at both the state and federal levels to ensure pipelines are regulated effectively and operated safely. Importantly, though, any legislation must be balanced to ensure that the industry can achieve these objectives while continuing to bring affordable, reliable energy to American families and businesses to meet growing energy demand, support our domestic economy and provide good-paying jobs.

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I look forward to the continued bipartisan efforts to address critical issues of pipeline safety that I have outlined today.

Sincerely,

Robin Rorick
Vice President - Midstream

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Plaintiff v. PANHANDLE EASTERN PIPE LINE COMPANY, LP, Defendant.	Civil Action No. 4:25-CV-01001

THE UNITED STATES' ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Plaintiff the United States of America, by the authority of the Attorney General of the United States, acting at the request of the Secretary of Transportation, files this complaint against Defendant Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Company, LP.

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This is a civil action brought by the United States against Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Company, LP (PEPL) for injunctive relief and civil penalties for violations of the federal pipeline safety laws codified in 49 U.S.C. § 60101, *et seq.* and regulations codified in 49 C.F.R. Part 192.

2. PEPL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Transfer, LP, operates the Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line, a 6,200-mile interstate transmission line that delivers natural gas from (among other places) northern Texas and the Oklahoma panhandle to markets in the Midwest.

3. On March 26, 2020, an incident occurred on the Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line at the Borchers Station near Meade, Kansas, resulting in the death of a PEPL employee.

4. PHMSA's investigation indicates that PEPL failed to follow its manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities at the Borchers Station in connection with the incident.

5. On June 15, 2023, PHMSA initiated an administrative enforcement proceeding against PEPL to recover civil penalties for the violations that led to the fatal gas pipeline incident at the Borchers Station.

6. On April 22, 2025, PHMSA terminated that administrative proceeding.

7. The United States seeks injunctive relief and civil penalties for Defendant's violation of the federal pipeline safety laws and regulations pursuant to the Pipeline Safety Act, 49 U.S.C. § 60120.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

8. This Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Sections 60120 and 60122 of the Pipeline Safety Act, 49 U.S.C. §§ 60120 and 60122, and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1345, and 1355.

9. Venue is proper in the Northern District of Texas under Section 60120 of the Pipeline Safety Act, 49 U.S.C. § 60120 and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(1), (c)(2) and 1395(a) because PEPL resides in the Northern District of Texas and is headquartered in Dallas, Texas, where PEPL maintains its principal place of business.

III. PARTIES

10. Plaintiff the United States of America brings this action at the request of the Secretary of Transportation. 49 U.S.C. § 60120(a).

11. Defendant PEPL is a limited partnership organized under Delaware law and headquartered in Dallas, Texas. PEPL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Transfer LP, a limited partnership organized under Delaware law and headquartered in Dallas, Texas. PEPL may be served at its principal place of business at 8111 Westchester Drive, Suite 600, Dallas, Texas 75225, through its registered agent.

12. Energy Transfer operates one of the largest natural gas pipeline systems in the United States, including approximately 20,090 miles of interstate natural gas pipelines.

13. PEPL operates a pipeline system that consists of four large-diameter, bidirectional natural gas transmission lines, extending approximately 1,300 miles from producing areas in the Anadarko Basin of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas through Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and into Michigan.

14. Energy Transfer and PEPL are operators of gas pipeline facilities subject to regulation by the Department of Transportation, through PHMSA, under various statutes and regulations applicable to the transportation of gas by pipeline. 49 U.S.C. § 60118(a); 49 C.F.R. Part 192.

15. PEPL is a "person" as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 60101(a)(17) and 49 C.F.R. § 192.3.

IV. AUTHORITY

16. Authority to bring this action is vested in the United States Department of Justice under 49 U.S.C. § 60120(a)(1) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 516 and 519. Under section 60120(a), the United States may bring a civil action to enforce chapter 601 of Title 49 of the U.S. Code and to enforce a regulation prescribed under this chapter.

V. FEDERAL PIPELINE SAFETY REGULATIONS

17. The purpose of the Pipeline Safety Act "is to provide adequate protection against risks to life and property posed by pipeline transportation and pipeline facilities by improving the regulatory and enforcement authority of the Secretary of Transportation." 49 U.S.C. § 60102(a)(1).

18. Section 60102(a) of the Pipeline Safety Act directs the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to "prescribe minimum safety standards for pipeline transportation and for pipeline facilities." 49 U.S.C. § 60102(a).

19. Under Chapter 601, PHMSA has promulgated regulations prescribing, among other things, minimum safety standards for the operation and maintenance of gas pipeline facilities.

20. As relevant here, these regulations are codified at 49 C.F.R. Part 192 (the "Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations").

21. The Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations contain requirements that apply to operators of gas pipeline facilities.

22. The Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations define "operator" as "a person who engages in the transportation of gas." 49 C.F.R. § 192.3. A "person" is defined for these purposes to include corporate entities, including "any . . . partnership." *Id.*

23. The Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations require that operators of gas pipeline facilities "prepare and follow . . . a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response." 49 C.F.R. § 192.605(a).

24. The United States may bring an action to enforce the Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations. 49 U.S.C. § 60120(a)(1). In such an action, the Court may award appropriate relief, including a temporary or permanent injunction, punitive damages, and civil penalties. *Id.* Moreover, civil actions to enforce the Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations are not subject to the limitations on civil penalties at 49 U.S.C. § 60122, which only apply in PHMSA administrative proceedings. 49 U.S.C. § 60120(a)(1).

VI. FACTS

25. PEPL and its parent company Energy Transfer are both "operator[s]," meaning persons "engage[d] in the transportation of gas." *See* 49 C.F.R. § 192.3. A "person" in this context means "any individual, firm, joint venture, [or] *partnership*." *Id.* (emphasis added).

26. On March 26, 2020, a PEPL technician was fatally injured in the course and scope of his duties at PEPL's Borchers Station near Meade, Kansas.

27. The PEPL technician was attempting to retrieve a 10-inch "cleaning pig" that became stuck in a partially pressurized receiving barrel at the Borchers Station due to

ice accumulation. A cleaning pig is an industry term for a cylindrical object that travels through the pipeline, removing deposits and contaminants like scale or rust.

28. The PEPL technician was attempting to break the ice in the receiving barrel using a stainless-steel rod. The PEPL technician broke the ice and caused the pig to become dislodged. The cleaning pig traveled out of the receiving barrel, striking the technician in the abdomen and seriously injuring him. The technician later died at the hospital from his injuries.

29. PHMSA investigators traveled onsite to investigate the incident.

30. PHMSA's investigation revealed that PEPL failed to follow its manual of written procedures in four areas.

31. First, PEPL's written procedure titled *Safety Procedure S-230, Hazardous Energy Control (Lockout Tagout) (Effective 08/01/2017)* requires the operator to de-energize the pipe prior to performance of scheduled activities.

32. On the day of the incident, PEPL failed to ensure that the piping at the pig receiver was clear of any hazardous energy and de-energized as required by PEPL's written procedure.

33. Second, PEPL's written procedure titled *Safety Procedure S-370 Work Permits (Effective 8/1/2017)* requires a "General Work Permit" for potentially hazardous work.

34. Prior to the incident, PEPL failed to obtain a "General Work Permit" that requires identification of all potential hazards and communication of those hazards to relevant personnel as required by PEPL's written procedure.

35. Third, PEPL's written procedure titled *Standard Operating Procedures, Pigging and Pig Trap Operation, Procedure: I.13 (Effective 5/1/2015)* includes several requirements for technicians who are engaged in pigging.

36. Section 7.2 of the pigging procedures states that personnel cannot "stand in front of the launcher or receiver door in the project path of the line-cleaning tool while opening."

37. On the day of the incident, a PEPL technician was standing in front of the receiver while trying to dislodge ice in violation of PEPL's written procedure.

38. Section 7.5 of the pigging procedures states that PEPL must "[v]erify the trap is depressured and that SOP B.06 Hazardous Energy Control and Safety Procedure S-230 Lockout Tag out are followed before opening the closure."

39. On the day of the incident a PEPL technician opened the closure without verifying that the trap was depressured in violation of PEPL's written procedure.

40. Fourth, PEPL's written procedure titled *Best Practice Clearing Freezes BP I.17(Effective 6/1/2013)* requires the technician to notify the operations manager, discuss the procedures to handle freezes, and to blowdown slowly on either side of the freeze to maintain a differential of 50 psi or less across the freeze, among other requirements.

41. On the day of the incident, PEPL personnel failed to make the requisite notification and attempted to clear the ice with a stainless-steel rod, which was not an approved method to clear freezes, in violation of PEPL's written procedure.

CAUSE OF ACTION

Civil Penalties Under the Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations
49 U.S.C. § 60120(a)

42. The United States realleges and incorporates by reference each of the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth in this paragraph.

43. PEPL is an "operator" within the meaning of 49 C.F.R. § 192.3.

44. The Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations require that the "operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response." 49 C.F.R. § 192.605(a).

45. As the operator of the gas pipeline facilities at the Borchers Station, PEPL had an obligation to prepare and follow a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities on the day of the incident. 49 U.S.C. § 60118(a).

46. PEPL failed to follow its manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities at the Borchers Station in violation of 49 C.F.R. § 192.605(a).

47. PEPL's violation of 49 C.F.R. § 192.605(a) caused a cleaning pig to be ejected from a partially-pressurized receiver barrel at the Borcher Station, which struck and ultimately killed a PEPL employee.

VII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Accordingly, the United States respectfully requests from this Court the following relief:

1. For such injunctive relief as necessary to compel PEPL to take appropriate actions to ensure PEPL's continued compliance with the Pipeline Safety Act and the Federal Gas Pipeline Safety Regulations;

2. Assess civil penalties against PEPL in an amount appropriate to the nature, circumstances, and gravity of the violation; the violator's degree of culpability; good faith in attempting to comply with regulations; the economic benefit gained from the violations without any reduction because of subsequent damages; and other matters that justice requires; and

3. Award the United States its costs of suit herein and grant all other additional relief as the Court may deem appropriate.

Respectfully submitted this 22nd day of April, 2025.

CHAD E. MEACHAM
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

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Attorneys for the United States of America

Subcommittee on Energy hearing entitled "Strengthening American Energy: A Review of Pipeline Safety Policy."
Additional Questions for the Record
for Andy Black, Liquid Energy Pipeline Association

The Honorable Robert Latta (R-OH)

1. **The PIPES Act of 2020 recognized the value of using new technologies to bolster both efficiency and safety. However, PHMSA's implementation of the program had many non-statutory requirements that ultimately deterred participation. At his confirmation hearing before Senate Commerce, PHMSA nominee Roberti committed to examining non-statutory hurdles to technology programs, but what guardrails should this Committee consider when authorizing such programs?**

A. PHMSA's failed implementation of the technology pilot program after Congressional authorization in 2020 demonstrates the need for further statutory guardrails to ensure PHMSA follows the will of Congress. To implement the 2020 program, PHMSA used processes and applied additional conditions and requirements that went beyond Congressional mandates and were inappropriate for the scope and risks of the program. For example, Congress required the newly authorized technology pilot program to meet the requirements of the separately authorized special permit program. This reflected a misreading of statutory intent where Congress specifically authorized the technology pilot program separate from the special permit program with its own special and unique requirements. PHMSA's actions also reflected the inappropriate application of unnecessary conditions. For example, the special permit requirements PHMSA invoked are for regulatory waivers that may stretch for the lifetime of a pipeline, which can last many decades. Technology pilots are mandated to sunset after not later than 3 years. Additionally, special permits as final agency actions trigger a NEPA review. Technology pilots are not final agency actions and PHMSA had never previously required NEPA review for any of its other research and development programs. To avoid a future administration from either unintentionally or intentionally thwarting this program, Congress should include statutory language preventing PHMSA from applying conditions beyond those specified in statute, including those of the special permit program, and prevent the invocation of NEPA review for technology pilots.

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX)

1) **In your testimony, you mentioned the need to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) technology demonstration pilot program. I have heard concerns from operators that the**

program's implementation has prevented its use to get these new pilot technologies into the field.

a) What actions can PHMSA take to maximize the program's effectiveness and ensure that new pilot technologies have a viable testbed?

A. Expiration of the 2020 PIPES technology program prevents PHMSA from implementing this program until new authorization is provided, which LEPA strongly supports. If Congress does reauthorize this program, PHMSA can ensure its success by promptly issued guidance reflecting the programmatic requirements set by Congress and ensuring the resources are in place to provide a timely review of technology pilot applications.

b) As the Energy and Commerce Committee works on a PHMSA reauthorization bill, what provisions would help ensure the program's success?

A. Provisions the Committee adopted last Congress in section 13 of H.R. 7655 would reauthorize, improve and protect the technology pilot program. Certainly, lowering limitations on mileage and percentage of system available for testing, and extending the years the program is authorized would allow for more technology testing. Section 13 also provided a new opportunity for multiple operators to participate in a single pilot program. Vital to the technology program's success are provisions to prevent PHMSA from imposing additional conditions not specified by Congress, prevent PHMSA from using the special permit program and its requirements to implement the technology pilot program, and prevent PHMSA from requiring a NEPA review of technology pilots.

Pipeline Safety TRUST

Credible.
Independent.
In the public interest.

September 25, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Chairman Latta,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Energy on July 22, 2025 to testify about pipeline safety. Please find my responses to the Questions for the Record I received on September 11, 2025.

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Kathy Castor (D-FL)

1. ***Throughout the hearing, we heard quite a bit about the drop off in PHMSA enforcement actions since the new Administration took office. Could you detail some of your understanding about the amount that enforcement dropped, why this happened, and what has happened in recent months?***

Thank you for this question and the opportunity to follow up. There was a robust discussion about the drop off in enforcement cases initiated by PHMSA at the hearing. However, we witnesses did not have the time to get into the details and nuance about enforcement. One of the other witnesses mentioned, I think correctly, that looking simply at the number of enforcement cases initiated is not the only way to monitor the level of enforcement happening at PHMSA. However, I believe that a deeper analysis of the enforcement data shows a troubling drop in enforcement at the agency.

A critical tool in PHMSA's enforcement toolkit not discussed at the hearing is civil penalties. From 2002 (the start of a data era in PHMSA's enforcement database) to January 20, 2025, there have been 1,033 proposed civil penalties, totaling $133,409,909, which averages to $129,148 per penalty. We can standardize this as 3.7 penalties proposed per 30 days and an average of $475,388.68 in total penalties proposed every 30 days.
Since the inauguration on January 20, 2025, there have been six proposed penalties, with a total of $404,100, and an average of $67,350 per penalty. We can standardize this as 0.73 penalties proposed per 30 days and an average of $8,147.18 per 30 days. These are huge drops from previous administrations. In fact, the average amount of proposed penalties per 30 days has dropped 98% since the inauguration.

Civil Penalties

	2002 – 1/20/25	**1/20/25 – 9/25/25**	**% change**
Average penalty	$129,148	$67,350	-48%

# of penalties proposed per 30 days	3.7	0.73	-80%
$ of penalties proposed per 30 days	$475,389	$8,147	-98%

*Source PHMSA Enforcement Database

Looking at enforcement cases initiated, as discussed at the hearing, we also see troubling decreases. Between 2002 and January 20, 2025, there were 4,876 enforcement cases initiated, which can be standardized to 17.4 cases every 30 days. Since the inauguration, there have been 71 cases, standardized to 8.6 cases per 30 days. This represents a more than 50% drop in cases initiated.

If we break it down to the levels of enforcement, we can group the higher tools of enforcement together (Notice of Probable Violation, Proposed Safety Order, Corrective Action Order) and see that the 30-day average from 2002 – January 20, 2025 is 6.2 and the 30-day average from inauguration through today is 2.9, another more than 50% drop. If we group the lower levels of enforcement together, we see a pre-inauguration rate of 11.2 and a post-inauguration rate of 5.7, just under a 50% drop.

Enforcement Cases Initiated

	2002 – 1/20/25	**1/20/25 – 9/25/25**	**% change**
# of cases per 30 days	17.4	8.6	-51%
# of stronger enforcement cases per 30 days	6.2	2.9	-53%
# of lesser enforcement cases per 30 days	11.2	5.7	-49%

The Honorable Doris Matsui (D-CA)

1. ***I wanted to follow up on a question from the hearing that we ran out of time for you to answer fully. Blending hydrogen into natural gas and running that blended gas through pipelines originally designed for only natural gas can present some unique safety concerns that have to be addressed. Can you describe some of the unique challenges and concerns with running hydrogen blends through pipelines originally only designed for natural gas?***

Thank you for this question and the opportunity to follow up. There are numerous potential safety issues with blending hydrogen into natural gas distribution systems designed, constructed, and maintained for dedicated natural gas. First off, hydrogen is much more flammable than methane, the primary component of natural gas, with a flammability range of 4% - 75%, vs. methane's 5% - 15%[1]. This means that hydrogen is more likely to explode at various concentrations than

[1] https://h2tools.org/bestpractices/gaseous-gh2-and-liquid-h2-fueling-stations/hydrogen-compared-to-other-fuels

methane. Hydrogen can leak at a faster rate than methane, which, combined with the flammability range, could lead to increased safety issues.

Additionally, many pipeline materials are inappropriate for transporting hydrogen due to embrittlement and cracking[2]. The introduction of hydrogen to existing natural gas pipelines could cause systems to fail at higher rates unless operators conducted extensive system surveys and upgrades.

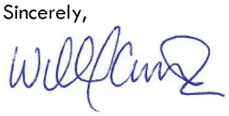
On top of this, there are no pipeline safety regulations specific to hydrogen blends to address these unique risks. In fact, operators are not even required to report the presence of blended hydrogen in their systems to regulators.

Finally, neither PHMSA, state regulators, nor the operators have jurisdiction or control over the pipe on the other side of the meter that goes into people's homes and businesses. We don't know if this pipe is appropriate for hydrogen blends when it is closest to people and can pose the biggest risk.

We need further research and development and rulemaking to ensure that if hydrogen blending were to occur, it will be done safely.

Thank you for your interest and leadership on pipeline safety.

Sincerely,



Bill Caram
Executive Director

[2] https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M493/K760/493760600.PDF

September 17, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latta,

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on Tuesday, July 22, 2025. Enclosed is my response to your question submitted for the record. If additional insight or information is needed, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Jim Moriarty

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Robert Latta (R-OH)

There are many technologies that can help operators ensure safety across their pipeline networks. How can PHMSA be a better partner in efforts to increase the use of technologies, and facilitate the development of new, emerging technologies?

Chairman Latta, thank you for the question. Not surprisingly, leak detection technology is advancing at a rapid rate. However, governmental review and approval of those technologies is not.

Chesapeake Utilities has implemented advanced leak detection across our service territories, including piloting new technologies that have deployed satellite technology for methane detection and finding leaks and monitoring devices at two above-ground facilities in Ohio and Delaware. Additionally, we are integrating two new advanced mobile leak detection ("AMLD") vehicles across our service territories and harnessing the power of cutting-edge software platforms that use artificial intelligence and machine learning to help prevent damage to assets, enhance safety and reduce operational risks.

PHMSA has been slow to approve the use of new technologies and the industry's ability to deploy advanced technologies. PHMSA must accelerate the prompt evaluation and approval of new pipeline safety technology that will lower costs for consumers. To stay up to date with industry advances, PHMSA should maintain regular communications with industry leaders so that the Agency is abreast of all technology being tested, evaluated, and utilized within the sector. PHMSA's advisory committees, such as Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC), could play a vital role in helping improve communication and the prompt identification of these important technologies.

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