

PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2002

[Public Law 107–355, enacted December 17, 2002]

[As Amended Through P.L. 116–260, Enacted December 27, 2020]

[Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 107–355. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>]

[Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; AMENDMENT OF TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.

(a) [49 U.S.C. 60101 note] SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002”.

(b) AMENDMENT OF TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or a repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 49, United States Code.

* * * * *

SEC. 8. PENALTIES.

(a)

* * * * *

(d) [49 U.S.C. 60122 note] COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General shall conduct a study of the actions, policies, and procedures of the Secretary of Transportation for assessing and collecting fines and penalties on operators of hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines.

(2) ANALYSIS.—In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall examine, at a minimum, the following:

(A) The frequency with which the Secretary has substituted corrective orders for fines and penalties.

(B) Changes in the amounts of fines recommended by safety inspectors, assessed by the Secretary, and actually collected.

(C) An evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Secretary’s enforcement strategy.

(D) The extent to which the Secretary has complied with the report of the Government Accounting Office entitled “Pipeline Safety: The Office of Pipeline Safety is Changing How it Oversees the Pipeline Industry”.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the study.

* * * * *

SEC. 12. [49 U.S.C. 60101 note] PIPELINE INTEGRITY, SAFETY, AND RELIABILITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The heads of the participating agencies shall carry out a program of research, development, demonstration, and standardization to ensure the integrity of pipeline facilities.

(b) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the heads of the participating agencies shall enter into a memorandum of understanding detailing their respective responsibilities in the program authorized by subsection (a).

(2) AREAS OF EXPERTISE.—Under the memorandum of understanding, each of the participating agencies shall have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the elements of the program within its expertise are implemented in accordance with this section. The Department of Transportation’s responsibilities shall reflect its lead role in pipeline safety and expertise in pipeline inspection, integrity management, and damage prevention. The Department of Energy’s responsibilities shall reflect its expertise in system reliability, low-volume gas leak detection, and surveillance technologies. The National Institute of Standards and Technology’s responsibilities shall reflect its expertise in materials research and assisting in the development of consensus technical standards, as that term is used in section 12(d)(4) of Public Law 104–13 (15 U.S.C. 272 note).

(c) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—The program authorized by subsection (a) shall include research, development, demonstration, and standardization activities related to—

- (1) materials inspection;
- (2) stress and fracture analysis, detection of cracks, abrasion, and other abnormalities inside pipelines that lead to pipeline failure, and development of new equipment or technologies that are inserted into pipelines to detect anomalies;
- (3) internal inspection and leak detection technologies, including detection of leaks at very low volumes;
- (4) methods of analyzing content of pipeline throughput;
- (5) pipeline security, including improving the real-time surveillance of pipeline rights-of-way, developing tools for evaluating and enhancing pipeline security and infrastructure, reducing natural, technological, and terrorist threats, and protecting first response units and persons near an incident;

(6) risk assessment methodology, including vulnerability assessment and reduction of third-party damage;

(7) communication, control, and information systems sur-
ety;

(8) fire safety of pipelines;

(9) improved excavation, construction, and repair tech-
nologies;

(10) corrosion detection and improving methods, best prac-
tices, and technologies for identifying, detecting, preventing,
and managing internal and external corrosion and other safety
risks; and

(11) other appropriate elements.

The results of activities carried out under paragraph (10) shall be
used by the participating agencies to support development and im-
provement of national consensus standards.

(d) PROGRAM PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of
enactment of this section, the Secretary of Transportation, in
coordination with the Secretary of Energy and the Director of
the National Institute of Standards and Technology, shall pre-
pare and transmit to Congress a 5-year program plan to guide
activities under this section. Such program plan shall be sub-
mitted to the Technical Pipeline Safety Standards Committee
and the Technical Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Standards
Committee for review, and the report to Congress shall include
the comments of the committees. The 5-year program plan
shall be based on the memorandum of understanding under
subsection (b) and take into account related activities of other
Federal agencies.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the program plan and
selecting and prioritizing appropriate project proposals, the
Secretary of Transportation shall consult with or seek the ad-
vice of appropriate representatives of the natural gas, crude
oil, and petroleum product pipeline industries, utilities, manu-
facturers, institutions of higher learning, Federal agencies,
pipeline research institutions, national laboratories, State pipe-
line safety officials, labor organizations, environmental organi-
zations, pipeline safety advocates, and professional and tech-
nical societies.

(3) ONGOING PIPELINE TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND DE-
VELOPMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After the initial 5-year program plan
has been carried out by the participating agencies, the Sec-
retary of Transportation, in coordination with the Director
of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as
appropriate, shall prepare a research and development
program plan every 5 years thereafter and shall transmit
a report to Congress on the status and results-to-date of
implementation of the program every 2 years. The biennial
report shall include a summary of updated research needs
and priorities identified through the consultation require-
ments of paragraph (2).

(B) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall comply with
the consultation requirements of paragraph (2) when pre-

paring the program plan and in the selection and prioritization of research and development projects.

(C) FUNDING FROM NON-FEDERAL SOURCES.—The Secretary shall ensure that—

(i) at least 30 percent of the costs of technology research and development activities may be carried out using non-Federal sources;

(ii) at least 20 percent of the costs of basic research and development with universities may be carried out using non-Federal sources; and

(iii) up to 100 percent of the costs of research and development for purely governmental purposes may be carried out using Federal funds.

(e) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the heads of the participating agencies shall transmit jointly to Congress a report on the status and results to date of the implementation of the program plan prepared under subsection (d).

(f) PIPELINE INTEGRITY PROGRAM.—Of the amounts available in the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund established by section 9509 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 9509), \$3,000,000 shall be transferred to the Secretary of Transportation, as provided in appropriation Acts, to carry out programs for detection, prevention, and mitigation of oil spills for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2023.

(g) PARTICIPATING AGENCIES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “participating agencies” means the Department of Transportation, the Department of Energy, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(h) INDEPENDENT EXPERTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the PIPES Act of 2016, the Secretary shall—

(1) implement processes and procedures to ensure that activities listed under subsection (c), to the greatest extent practicable, produce results that are peer-reviewed by independent experts and not by persons or entities that have a financial interest in the pipeline, petroleum, or natural gas industries, or that would be directly impacted by the results of the projects; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing the processes and procedures implemented under paragraph (1).

(i) CONFLICT OF INTEREST.—The Secretary shall take all practical steps to ensure that each recipient of an agreement under this section discloses in writing to the Secretary any conflict of interest on a research and development project carried out under this section, and includes any such disclosure as part of the final deliverable pursuant to such agreement. The Secretary may not make an award under this section directly to a pipeline owner or operator that is regulated by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration or a State-certified regulatory authority if there is a conflict of interest relating to such owner or operator.

SEC. 13. PIPELINE QUALIFICATION PROGRAMS.

(a)

* * * * *

(b) **[49 U.S.C. 60131 note] PILOT PROGRAM FOR CERTIFICATION OF CERTAIN PIPELINE WORKERS.—**(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 36 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall—

(A) develop tests and other requirements for certifying the qualifications of individuals who operate computer-based systems for controlling the operations of pipelines; and

(B) establish and carry out a pilot program for 3 pipeline facilities under which the individuals operating computer-based systems for controlling the operations of pipelines at such facilities are required to be certified under the process established under subparagraph (A).

(2) **REPORT.**—The Secretary shall include in the report required under section 60131(h), as added by subsection (a) of this section, the results of the pilot program. The report shall include—

(A) a description of the pilot program and implementation of the pilot program at each of the 3 pipeline facilities;

(B) an evaluation of the pilot program, including the effectiveness of the process for certifying individuals who operate computer-based systems for controlling the operations of pipelines;

(C) any recommendations of the Secretary for requiring the certification of all individuals who operate computer-based systems for controlling the operations of pipelines; and

(D) an assessment of the ramifications of requiring the certification of other individuals performing safety-sensitive functions for a pipeline facility.

(3) **COMPUTER-BASED SYSTEMS DEFINED.**—In this subsection, the term “computer-based systems” means supervisory control and data acquisition systems.**SEC. 14. RISK ANALYSIS AND INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOR GAS PIPELINES.**

(a)

* * * * *

(d) **[49 U.S.C. 60109 note] STUDY OF REASSESSMENT INTERVALS.—**(1) **STUDY.**—The Comptroller General shall conduct a study to evaluate the 7-year reassessment interval required by section 60109(c)(3)(B) of title 49, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) of this section.(2) **REPORT.**—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit to Congress a report on the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

* * * * *

SEC. 17. [49 U.S.C. 60114 note] NATIONWIDE TOLL-FREE NUMBER SYSTEM.

Within 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall, in conjunction with the Federal Communications Commission, facility operators, excavators, and one-call notification system operators, provide for the establishment of a 3-digit nationwide toll-free telephone number system to be used by State one-call notification systems.

SEC. 18. IMPLEMENTATION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as otherwise required by this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall implement the safety improvement recommendations provided for in the Department of Transportation Inspector General's Report (RT-2000-069).

(b) **REPORTS BY THE SECRETARY.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter until each of the recommendations referred to in subsection (a) has been implemented, the Secretary shall transmit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the specific actions taken to implement such recommendations.

(c) **REPORTS BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.**—The Inspector General shall periodically transmit to the committees referred to in subsection (b) a report assessing the Secretary's progress in implementing the recommendations referred to in subsection (a) and identifying options for the Secretary to consider in accelerating recommendation implementation.

SEC. 19. [49 U.S.C. 1135 note] NTSB SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Transportation, the Administrator of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, and the Director of the Office of Pipeline Safety shall fully comply with section 1135 of title 49, United States Code, to ensure timely responsiveness to National Transportation Safety Board recommendations about pipeline safety.

(b) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.**—The Secretary, Administrator, or Director, respectively, shall make a copy of each recommendation on pipeline safety and response, as described in subsections (a) and (b) of section 1135, title 49, United States Code.

(c) **REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**—The Secretary, Administrator, or Director, respectively, shall submit to Congress by January 1 of each year a report containing each recommendation on pipeline safety made by the Board during the prior year and a copy of the response to each such recommendation.

* * * * *

SEC. 24. [49 U.S.C. 60102 note] STATE PIPELINE SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

Within 90 days after receiving recommendations for improvements to pipeline safety from an advisory committee appointed by the Governor of any State, the Secretary of Transportation shall respond in writing to the committee setting forth what action, if any, the Secretary will take on those recommendations and the Sec-

retary's reasons for acting or not acting upon any of the recommendations.

SEC. 25. [49 U.S.C. 60108 note] PIPELINE BRIDGE RISK STUDY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Transportation shall conduct a study to determine whether cable-suspension pipeline bridges pose structural or other risks warranting particularized attention in connection with pipeline operators risk assessment programs and whether particularized inspection standards need to be developed by the Department of Transportation to recognize the peculiar risks posed by such bridges.

(b) **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMENTS.**—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall provide, to the maximum extent practicable, for public participation and comment and shall solicit views and comments from the public and interested persons, including participants in the pipeline industry with knowledge and experience in inspection of pipeline facilities.

(c) **COMPLETION AND REPORT.**—Within 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall complete the study and transmit to Congress a report detailing the results of the study.

(d) **FUNDING.**—The Secretary may carry out this section using only amounts that are specifically appropriated to carry out this section.

SEC. 26. [15 U.S.C. 717m note] STUDY AND REPORT ON NATURAL GAS PIPELINE AND STORAGE FACILITIES IN NEW ENGLAND.

(a) **STUDY.**—The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, in consultation with the Department of Energy, shall conduct a study on the natural gas pipeline transmission network in New England and natural gas storage facilities associated with that network.

(b) **CONSIDERATION.**—In carrying out the study, the Commission shall consider the ability of natural gas pipeline and storage facilities in New England to meet current and projected demand by gas-fired power generation plants and other consumers.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report containing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a), including recommendations for addressing potential natural gas transmission and storage capacity problems in New England.