

Statement by PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman

Agency Concurrs that More Pipeline Safety Resources Are Needed

WASHINGTON—The Department of Transportation’s Inspector General’s report about the integrity management program for hazardous liquid pipelines was released today. It concluded that these pipelines need additional resources to be dedicated by the Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to the oversight of these pipelines.

PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman issued the following statement in conjunction with the agency’s official response:

Pipeline safety is our top priority. Americans depend upon the 2.6 million miles of pipeline that crisscross our nation to deliver energy products that fuel our everyday lives. They rely upon us to ensure that those pipelines are safe.

We agree with the inspector general that the operation of the nation’s hazardous liquid pipeline needs significantly more resources dedicated to their oversight. And we’ve asked for the tools to do just that. The President’s Fiscal Year 2013 budget requests 150 additional personnel, including 120 inspection and enforcement staff, nearly doubling our regulatory reach. In addition, it supports the establishment of a nationwide accident investigation team, improves our ability to collect and analyze much needed data about the nation's pipeline systems, and increases funding of research and development and public awareness campaigns.

In the meantime, we are using every available resource to hold operators accountable, keep the public informed and collect as much data as possible. Over the past year, we’ve hosted numerous pipeline safety workshops for operators, the public and emergency responders. We are also in the midst of a rule making associated with these pipelines. I invite the public to visit our website and learn more about pipelines in their states, who regulates them and what kinds of incidents have occurred.

The bottom line is that the more we know about pipelines, the safer we are. Our goal is to collect and analyze more information about pipeline performance, and to hire enough inspectors and enforcement personnel to quickly act upon that information.

I thank the inspector general and his staff for their professionalism and for providing a roadmap for future improvements and validation that pipeline safety must continue to be a priority.

PHMSA provides information to the public about pipelines on its [Pipeline Safety Awareness](#) website as well as the [state pipeline profiles](#). The Public may also examine the integrity management performance measures of pipeline operators here. Go to phmsa.dot.gov to sign up for pipeline program updates.

Pipeline Safety Fact Sheet

- **October 2010:** PHMSA issued [Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) on the safety of onshore hazardous liquid pipelines (covers corrosion, valve placement, safety procedures).
- **November 2010:** PHMSA issued [final rule](#) to require electronic filing and standardization of all reports.
- **January 2011:** Pipeline Data Mart was upgraded to improve inspector access to operator-submitted data, which makes it easier to review and identify data system and quality issues.
- **April 4, 2011:** Secretary LaHood issued [Call to Action](#), urging pipeline owners and operators to conduct comprehensive reviews and identify high risk pipeline and accelerate critical repair and replacement work
- **April 2011:** Created [Pipeline Safety Awareness Website](#)
- **April 2011:** PHMSA and CPUC conducted integrity management inspection of PG&E
- **July 2011:** PHMSA held the [Managing Challenges with Pipeline Seam Welds workshop](#) to discuss the integrity of these seams, which NTSB cited as a cause in the San Bruno tragedy. Approximately 265 attended and more than 250 participated via the webcast
- **July 2011:** PHMSA held the [Improving Pipeline Risks, Assessments and Recordkeeping workshop](#). NTSB cited recordkeeping and retention as a contributing cause in the San Bruno accident. Approximately 230 attended and more than 300 participated via the webcast
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- **August 2011:** Issued an [Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on improving the safety of onshore gas transmission lines](#).
- **December 2011:** PHMSA held [Emergency Response Forum](#) following up on issues related to the pipeline incident in San Bruno. More than 150 attended and more than 200 participated via the webcast
- **January 2012:** President Obama signed into law the [Pipeline Safety Regulatory, Certainty, and Job Creation Act](#). Doubles the maximum fine for safety violations to \$2 million; authorizes more pipeline inspectors; and requires automatic shut-off valves on new or replaced pipelines
- **March 19, 2012:** Awarded contract to the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a [study](#) on diluted bitumen
- **March 27-28, 2012:** PHMSA held [workshops on pipeline leak detection and the use of automatic/remote controlled valves](#). Total of 360 participants and 797 webcast views over two days. Audience consisted of representatives from the pipeline industry, government and the general public.
- **March 30, 2012:** Issued an [Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposes new procedures to strengthen excavation damage prevention](#) programs and increase penalties for violators
- **May 7, 2012:** Issued [advisory bulletin](#) reminding pipeline operations of the requirements to preserve and verify records
- **May 15, 2012:** Sought comment on [proposal](#) to collect information on the use of excess flow valves
- **June 11, 2012:** Issued [Advisory Bulletin on Completing Mechanical Fitting Failure Form](#) reminding gas distribution pipeline facilities of mandatory reporting requirements.
- **June 27, 2012:** Holding [public meeting](#) on implementing integrity management of gas distribution pipelines
- **July 18-19, 2012:** Holding pipeline [research and development forum](#) to identify technical challenges and discuss solutions to improve the safe operation of pipelines
- **October 2012:** Will hold data workshop about integrity management to solicit input on meaningful performance measures.