



VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

September 11, 2020

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Re: Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee Meeting, Docket No. PHMSA-2013-0255,
Pipeline Safety: Valve Installation and Minimum Rupture Detection
Standards**

To Whom It May Concern:

On July 22, 2020, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA or Agency) convened a meeting of the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC or Committee) to review a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) in the above-captioned proceeding.¹ GPA Midstream Association (GPA Midstream)² participated in the meeting and offered public comments for the GPAC's consideration, particularly with respect to the applicability of the NPRM to gas gathering lines.³ Consistent with our previously-filed written comments,⁴ GPA Midstream informed the GPAC that PHMSA had not identified a proper legal basis in the NPRM for requiring the installation of rupture mitigation valves on gathering lines, and that the record did not contain sufficient evidence to support such a proposal.⁵

In response to GPA Midstream's comments, the GPAC adopted a unanimous recommendation that the Agency consider the appropriateness of applying the NPRM to gas gathering lines in the current rulemaking proceeding, or in a separate rulemaking proceeding, due

¹ Pipeline Safety: Valve Installation and Minimum Rupture Detection Standards, 85 Fed. Reg. 7,162 (Feb. 6, 2020) (hereinafter "NPRM").

² GPA Midstream has served the U.S. energy industry since 1921. GPA Midstream is composed of close to seventy member companies that are engaged in the gathering and processing of natural gas into merchantable pipeline gas, commonly referred to in the industry as "midstream activities." Such processing includes the removal of impurities from the raw gas stream produced at the wellhead as well as the extraction for sale of natural gas liquid products (NGLs) such as ethane, propane, butane, and natural gasoline or in the manufacture, transportation, or further processing of liquid products from natural gas. GPA Midstream membership accounts for more than 90% of the NGLs produced in the United States from natural gas processing.

³ GPAC Transcript at 183-185, <https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/meetings/FilGet.mtg?fil=1120>

⁴ GPA Midstream Comments (Apr. 6, 2020), <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=PHMSA-2013-0255-0020>.

⁵ *Id.*

to the lack of public notice.⁶ The Liquid Pipeline Advisory Committee (LPAC) adopted a similar unanimous recommendation the following day in addressing the applicability of the NPRM to hazardous liquid gathering lines.

GPA Midstream remains strongly opposed to applying the rupture mitigation installation requirements to gas gathering lines. As the GPAC unanimously concluded, the Agency did not provide the public with adequate notice of its intent to pursue that action in the NPRM, nor did PHMSA consider the costs, benefits, or other impacts of requiring rupture mitigation valves on gathering lines in the Preliminary Regulatory Impact Analysis. These are fundamental flaws in the rulemaking process that the Agency cannot remedy during the remaining stages of this proceeding. The only appropriate course of action, as GPA Midstream recently explained in its joint comment letter addressing the LPAC's recommendation for hazardous liquid gathering lines,⁷ is to provide an exception in the final rule for gas gathering lines.

GPA Midstream shares PHMSA's commitment to pipeline safety and appreciates the opportunity to submit these supplemental comments for the Agency's consideration in developing the final rule. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 202-279-1664 or mhite@gpamidstream.org.

Sincerely,



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⁶ GPAC Transcript at 251.

⁷ Joint Comments of the American Petroleum Institute, Association of Oil Pipe Lines, and GPA Midstream Association (Sept. 8, 2020), <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=PHMSA-2013-0255-0038>.