

November 18, 2019

Members of the Committee on Energy & Commerce
Members of the Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Committees on Energy & Commerce and Transportation & Infrastructure:

We are writing on behalf of the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, American Gas Association, American Petroleum Institute, American Public Gas Association, Association of Oil Pipe Lines, GPA Midstream Association, and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America to express our support for a bipartisan reauthorization of the federal pipeline safety laws administered by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), our nation's pipeline safety regulatory agency. This reauthorization offers an opportunity for Congress to support numerous improvements in the federal pipeline safety program. We are concerned, however, that a partisan approach to this legislation will diminish the prospects for enacting such improvements.

We appreciate the productive hearings on reauthorization in your committees earlier this year. Witnesses at those hearings testified on the need to address the issues brought to light by the 2018 incident in Merrimack Valley, MA, the potential to harness new technologies and engineering practices to improve pipeline safety, and how to provide PHMSA additional tools and resources for modernizing its pipeline safety rules.

Your committees' efforts to date have shown that there would be broad bipartisan support for a number of proposals to advance pipeline safety. Such examples include enhancing PHMSA's workforce, increasing funding for State pipeline safety regulators, reauthorizing emergency responder grant funding, promoting innovative technologies, and updating PHMSA regulations to address the intent of relevant National Transportation Safety Board recommendations. The pipeline industry supports Congress acting in each of these areas and wants to work collaboratively with your committees to advance pipeline safety in our country.

Consequently, it concerns us that the legislation that your committees intend to mark up this week does not reflect bipartisan consensus. Pipeline safety legislation historically has been enacted on a bipartisan basis, and bipartisanship will ultimately be essential to achieve the bicameral support needed in this Congress to reauthorize PHMSA.

We encourage you to maintain the tradition of bipartisanship that has characterized pipeline safety legislation for decades. We worry that absent such an approach, PHMSA will remain unauthorized and important opportunities to enhance our nation's pipeline safety program will be forfeited.

Our organizations stand ready to work with your committees to advance a strong, bipartisan PHMSA reauthorization.

Respectfully,



Chet M. Thompson
President and CEO
American Fuel & Petrochemical
Manufacturers



Andrew J. Black
President and CEO
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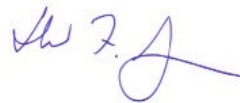
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