



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The House requested (House Report 116-106) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide a report on PHMSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 staffing and hiring plans and actual turnover and hiring in FY 2019 for the Office of Pipeline Safety. This is requested within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6). I have enclosed the requested report.

PHMSA continues to work towards its full employment goal of 308 Pipeline Safety personnel. Pipeline Safety inspectors typically are engineers, who are difficult to recruit and retain, as there is a high demand for this skill set among the regulated industry. In FY 2020, PHMSA continues to implement hiring solutions, such as outreach to veterans, multiple concurrent hiring announcements, and partnerships with university engineering departments. While PHMSA is successful in recruiting and hiring, we continue to be challenged with employee retention. In total, PHMSA lost a net of 9 (23 hires less 32 separations) pipeline safety employees. PHMSA will continue to use innovative hiring and retention strategies as detailed in the report.

I have sent similar letters to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations; the Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies; and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

The Honorable Richard Shelby
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Should you require any further information or assistance, please feel free to call me or have your staff contact Benjamin Kochman, Director of the Office of Governmental, International and Public Affairs, by phone at 202-366-0544 or by e-mail at Benjamin.Kochman@dot.gov.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Howard R. Elliott

Enclosure



U.S. Department
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**Pipeline and Hazardous
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Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

The House requested (House Report 116-106) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide a report on PHMSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 staffing and hiring plans and actual turnover and hiring in FY 2019 for the Office of Pipeline Safety. This is requested within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6). I have enclosed the requested report.

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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

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The Honorable Jack Reed

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairman:

The House requested (House Report 116-106) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide a report on PHMSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 staffing and hiring plans and actual turnover and hiring in FY 2019 for the Office of Pipeline Safety. This is requested within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6). I have enclosed the requested report.

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The Honorable Nita Lowey
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Granger:

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The Honorable Kay Granger
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April 17, 2020

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The House requested (House Report 116-106) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide a report on PHMSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 staffing and hiring plans and actual turnover and hiring in FY 2019 for the Office of Pipeline Safety. This is requested within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6). I have enclosed the requested report.

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The Honorable David E. Price
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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April 17, 2020

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Diaz-Balart:

The House requested (House Report 116-106) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide a report on PHMSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 staffing and hiring plans and actual turnover and hiring in FY 2019 for the Office of Pipeline Safety. This is requested within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (Public Law 116-6). I have enclosed the requested report.

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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
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Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety
FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2019 Hiring Plan

FY 2019 Hiring and Turnover

In FY 2019, the Office of Pipeline Safety staffing decreased from 297 full-time personnel on October 1, 2018, to 288 full-time personnel on September 30, 2019. PHMSA hired 23 Pipeline Safety employees. Of these 23 hires, 12 were inspectors and 11 were other safety staff. In the same period, 32 employees left the Office of Pipeline Safety, resulting in a net decrease of 9 employees. The turnover rate was 11.1 percent, using an average number of 288 employees.

FY 2019 Pipeline Safety Hiring and Turnover

Onboard October 1, 2018¹	Hiring FY 2019	Separations FY 2019	Onboard September 30, 2019	Turnover Rate FY 2019²
297	23	(32)	288	11.1%

1/ The Onboard October 1, 2018 count of 297 reflects an adjustment to correct the number of employees onboard at the start of the year.

2/ Turnover calculated using the number of separations divided by the average number of Pipeline Safety employees onboard of 288 in FY 2019.

Pipeline Safety Hiring Plan

In FY 2020, PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety received funding for the requested 308 Pipeline Safety positions. As of September 30, 2019, the Office of Pipeline Safety had 288 (93 percent) of its positions filled. Of the 288 persons onboard, 143 were inspectors; of the 21 vacancies, 12 were inspector positions. PHMSA experienced an 11.1% turnover rate. This rate is largely attributed to the robust energy industry. Growth in this industry has created job openings for pipeline and energy systems engineers in both the private and public sectors, resulting in a shortage of qualified applicants.

PHMSA undertook a comprehensive workforce planning effort in 2019 to evaluate the current workforce at a strategic level and to determine future supply and demand needs, as well as strategies for taking action over the next three years. This FY 2020 Strategic Workforce Plan incorporates PHMSA's strategic priorities and guidance from DOT strategic documents, including the requirements provided in DOT's Strategic Workforce Planning Guidance.

PHMSA is taking a variety of actions to onboard and retain highly qualified staff in the current competitive market. Specifically, PHMSA will implement the following strategies in FY 2020:

- Use Direct Hiring Authority for pipeline safety positions that qualify as science, technology, engineering, and math positions. This hiring authority is made available through OPM guidance (October 2018).
- Invest in science, technology, engineering, and math education programs, promoting pipeline safety engineering positions.

- Leverage existing Federal STEM education programs (e.g., the Department of Defense SMART program) to generate qualified candidates for PHMSA positions in the engineering field.
- Review PHMSA Mission Critical Occupations and develop hiring strategies for each.
- Improve succession planning for pipeline engineers, subject matter experts, and other key leadership positions, including through the PHMSA Advanced Leadership Development program.
- Make use of Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives to attract and retain talent in hard to fill positions, including pipeline safety engineering positions.
- Hire more entry-level pipeline engineers and use newly requested training and retention funding to develop highly qualified staff and offer incentives to improve retention throughout their careers.
- Expand the use of job fairs at colleges and universities with engineering programs to recruit inspecting pipeline engineers.