



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

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 23, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Leahy:

The House directed (House Report 117-99) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2022, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2021, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2021 as outlined in the fiscal year 2021 hiring plan which was included in the Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2021 Hiring Plan.” This is required within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. 117-103). I have enclosed PHMSA’s report that meets this requirement.

PHMSA continues to work towards its fiscal year (FY) 2022 employment goal of 337 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 in the regulated industry. As a result of aggressive hiring strategies implemented in FY 2021, the Office of Pipeline Safety had 301 (94 percent) of its positions filled as of September 30, 2021. In FY 2022, PHMSA continues to implement hiring solutions, such as special pay rates, recruitment and retention bonuses, tuition assistance, and student loan repayment. PHMSA will continue to use innovative hiring and retention strategies as detailed in the report.

A similar response has been sent to the Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations; the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies; the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations; and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy

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Should you require any further information or assistance, please feel free to call me or have your staff contact Patricia Klinger, Deputy Director of the Office of Governmental, International and Public Affairs, by phone at 202-366-6374 or by e-mail at Patricia.Klinger@dot.gov.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tristan H. Brown". The signature is written in dark ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

Enclosure



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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 23, 2022

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

Dear Vice Chairman Shelby:

The House directed (House Report 117-99) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2022, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2021, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2021 as outlined in the fiscal year 2021 hiring plan which was included in the Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2021 Hiring Plan.” This is required within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. 117-103). I have enclosed PHMSA’s report that meets this requirement.

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The Honorable Richard Shelby
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Deputy Administrator

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September 23, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Schatz:

The House directed (House Report 117-99) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2022, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2021, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2021 as outlined in the fiscal year 2021 hiring plan which was included in the Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2021 Hiring Plan.” This is required within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. 117-103). I have enclosed PHMSA’s report that meets this requirement.

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The Honorable Brian Schatz

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Deputy Administrator

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
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September 23, 2022

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

Dear Ranking Member Collins:

The House directed (House Report 117-99) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2022, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2021, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2021 as outlined in the fiscal year 2021 hiring plan which was included in the Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2021 Hiring Plan.” This is required within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. 117-103). I have enclosed PHMSA’s report that meets this requirement.

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The Honorable Susan Collins

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 23, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro:

The House directed (House Report 117-99) that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2022, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2021, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2021 as outlined in the fiscal year 2021 hiring plan which was included in the Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2020 Hiring Actuals and FY 2021 Hiring Plan.” This is required within 120 days after enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. 117-103). I have enclosed PHMSA’s report that meets this requirement.

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The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 23, 2022

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

Dear Ranking Member Granger:

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The Honorable Kay Granger

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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September 23, 2022

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

Dear Chairman Price:

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The Honorable David E. Price

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Tristan H. Brown
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Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Transportation,
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Washington, DC 20515

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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 2021 Hiring Actuals and FY 2022 Hiring Plan**

FY 2021 Hiring and Turnover

In FY 2021, the Office of Pipeline Safety onboard staff decreased from 305 full-time personnel on October 1, 2020, to 301 on September 30, 2021. During this twelve-month period, PHMSA hired 18 Pipeline Safety employees. Of these 18 hires, 11 were inspectors, and 7 were other safety staff. In the same period, 22 employees left the Office of Pipeline Safety, resulting in a net decrease of 4 employees. The turnover rate was 7 percent, using an average number of 303 employees as shown below.

FY 2021 Pipeline Safety Hiring and Turnover

Onboard October 1, 2020	Hiring FY 2021	Separations FY 2021	Onboard September 30, 2021	Turnover Rate FY 2021¹
305	18	(22)	301	7%

1/ Turnover calculated using the number of separations divided by the average number of Pipeline Safety employees onboard of 303 in FY 2021.

In FY 2021, PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety had funding for 320 positions. As of September 30, 2021, the Office of Pipeline Safety had 301 (94 percent) of its positions filled. Of the 18 persons hired, 11 were inspectors; of the 22 separations, 12 were inspector positions. PHMSA experienced a seven percent turnover rate in FY 2021, down from eight percent in FY 2020. In FY 2021, PHMSA hired 4 fewer people than it separated (18 hired, 22 separated).

PHMSA expects that its hiring plan below, including the addition of hiring and retention incentives, and expanding workplace flexibilities such as remote work, increased telework, and various work schedule options will further reduce turnover and accelerate the filling of newly added positions and vacancies when turnover occurs.

FY 2022 Pipeline Safety Hiring Plan

In FY 2022, PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety received funding for the requested 337 Pipeline Safety positions. This included funding to bring the inspection and enforcement staff count to 235 and to complete the hiring of 8 regulatory staff. On December 28, 2020, the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act of 2020 (Pub. L. 116-260) (PIPES Act) became law. It recognized the importance of hiring and retaining the best and brightest inspectors. The Act supports PHMSA's pipeline safety workforce by increasing the minimum number of agency inspection and enforcement personnel, as well as directing the agency to hire additional subject matter experts to support its rulemaking activities. This Act added 8 regulatory staff and called on PHMSA to maintain increasing numbers of inspection staff for each FY2021, 2022 and 2023. To address the agency's difficulty in recruiting and retaining its workforce, the Act directs the Secretary to use incentives, including special pay rates, repayment of student

loans, tuition assistance, and hiring bonuses, coupled with continued service agreements, to better attract and sustain a qualified, dedicated workforce.

PHMSA had started implementing these strategies following a comprehensive workforce planning effort in 2021, which evaluated the current workforce at a strategic level to determine future hiring and placement needs and inform human capital initiatives, such as the PHMSA hiring strategies, over the subsequent three years.

PHMSA will implement and/or continue the following strategies in FY 2022:

- PHMSA received approval for Direct-Hire Authority (DHA) in accordance with Public Law No: 114-183, PIPES Act of 2016, Section 9 Workforce Management, subsection (b) Direct Hiring, which states that PHMSA may apply to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for the authority to appoint qualified candidates to any position relating to pipeline safety.
- Continue using the current Direct Hiring Authority for pipeline safety positions that qualify as science, technology, engineering, and math positions until the new request has been approved by OPM. This hiring authority is made available through OPM guidance (October 2018).
- Offer mission-critical positions special pay rates, repayment of student loans, tuition assistance, and bonuses, coupled with continued service agreements.
- Invest in science, technology, engineering, and math education programs, promoting pipeline safety engineering positions.
- Review PHMSA Mission Critical Occupations and develop targeted hiring strategies for each.
- Continue participation in events, such as the in-person/virtual career fairs at National HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and conduct outreach to Affinity Groups, such as: The Society of Women Engineers (SWE); The Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE); The National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE); The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). These efforts will improve the agency's visibility among qualified engineering position candidates.
- Increase awareness of the PHMSA mission through the establishment of Handshake accounts, to date PHMSA has 225 Handshake accounts with Colleges and Universities that will allow us to provide job and student opportunities directly to Career centers. Handshake is an application that was created to ensure that all college students have equal access to meaningful careers.

- Improve succession planning for pipeline engineers, subject matter experts, and other key leadership positions, including through the PHMSA Advanced Leadership Development Program.
- Use 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 with career ladders, use newly requested training and retention funding to develop highly qualified staff, and offer incentives to improve retention throughout employees' careers.
- Develop a student pipeline utilizing the Pathways Program, which offers federal internship and employment opportunities for current students, recent graduates, and those with an advanced degree.
- Expand the use of job fairs at colleges and universities with engineering programs to recruit pipeline engineers.