



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

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murray:

Enclosed is the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) FY 2023 Hiring Actuals and FY 2024 Hiring Plan, as directed by House Report 118-154 which accompanied the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-42).

House report 118-154 directs PHMSA to provide “(1) staffing and hiring plans for fiscal year 2024, (2) information on the actual turnover and hiring in fiscal year 2023, and (3) outcomes for the workforce retention and recruitment strategies PHMSA implemented or continued in fiscal year 2023.” The enclosed report meets these requirements.

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Should you require any further information or assistance, please feel free to call me, or have your staff contact Matt Sonneborn, Director of Governmental, International, and Public Affairs, by phone at 202-366-4831 or by e-mail at matthew.sonneborn@dot.gov.

The Honorable Patty Murray

Page 2

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tristan H. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

Enclosure



U.S. Department
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Vice Chair Collins:

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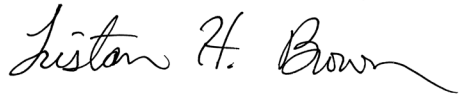
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The Honorable Susan Collins

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Sincerely,

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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U.S. Department
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**Pipeline and Hazardous
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Schatz:

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

Enclosed is the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) FY 2023 Hiring Actuals and FY 2024 Hiring Plan, as directed by House Report 118-154 which accompanied the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-42).

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The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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U.S. Department
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole:

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The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro

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Tristan H. Brown
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September 20, 2024

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member DeLauro:

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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U.S. Department
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Womack:

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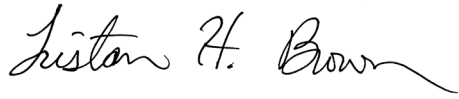
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The Honorable Steve Womack

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Tristan H. Brown
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U.S. Department
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 20, 2024

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Quigley:

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The Honorable Mike Quigley

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Tristan H. Brown
Deputy Administrator

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Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety FY 2023 Hiring Actuals and FY 2024 Hiring Plan

FY 2023 Hiring and Turnover

In FY 2023, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) ended with 331 full-time personnel on board as of September 30, 2023, with 48 hires and 26 separations occurring throughout the year. This is a net increase of 22 employees for pipeline safety, a dramatic improvement over FY 2022.

FY 2023 Pipeline Safety Hiring and Turnover

Onboard September 30, 2022¹	Hiring FY 2023	Separations FY 2023	Onboard September 30, 2023	Turnover Rate FY 2023²
309	48	26	331	8%

¹Includes upward adjustment of two employees for total Onboard 9/30/22.

²Turnover calculated using the number of separations divided by 320, the average of the onboard counts at the beginning and end of the fiscal year.

Of the 48 hired by OPS, 24 were inspection and enforcement personnel. Of the 26 employees who separated from OPS, 15 were inspection and enforcement personnel. These figures indicated a turnover rate of eight percent, calculated using the number of separations divided by the average number (320) of Pipeline Safety employees onboard in FY 2023.

FY 2023 Recruitment Strategies Outcome

In FY 2023, PHMSA's successful recruitment strategies resulted in a net gain of 22 positions filled and a reduction in separations. PHMSA's strategies of leveraging direct hiring authority for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) positions, offering competitive special pay rates, and enhancing leadership development programs proved effective in attracting and retaining qualified candidates.

FY 2024 Hiring Plan

In FY 2023, OPS had funding for 374 positions, nine of which were funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58). As of September 30, 2023, OPS had filled 331 positions (88 percent). For FY 2024, PHMSA's recruitment and retention strategy continues to focus on soon-to-be college graduates and recent graduates for entry-level opportunities, internships, and career-ladder positions to create a pipeline of future engineers.

While PHMSA has successfully recruited qualified applicants, the data shows that retaining select employees is the biggest challenge as private-sector salaries are often greater than federal salaries. The Agency is adding retention strategies to address this issue, including group incentives, student loan repayment, and tuition reimbursement for existing employees.

In FY 2024, OPS received funding for 374 Pipeline Safety positions, nine of which are funded through the IIJA. PHMSA will continue to implement the following strategies to attract and retain qualified candidates:

- Use the current Office of Personnel Management-approved **Direct Hiring Authority** for pipeline safety positions that qualify as STEM positions.
- Encourage retention through investments in the **Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Leadership Development Programs**. These programs help individuals develop the competencies needed to excel, as well as improve retention by providing career growth opportunities and enhancing job satisfaction.
- Use PHMSA's **Special Rate Table** to offer increased salary levels for newly hired engineers up to a GS-12.
- Pay a **group retention incentive with a 10 percent premium to pipeline inspection engineers with one or more years of service** in exchange for their signing a **three-year continuation of service agreement**.
- Conduct **hiring events at universities** across the United States with a special emphasis on institutions serving diverse populations.
- PHMSA is in the final stages of implementing a Student Loan Reimbursement Program and a Tuition Reimbursement Plan and anticipates implementation by December 2024.