



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

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

July 8, 2016

Dear Emergency Response Stakeholders,

Strong and effective communication between emergency responders and pipeline operators is an important aspect of pipeline safety. In 2012, a diverse group of pipeline operators, emergency responders, state 811 personnel, and state and federal regulators, with the support of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), came together and created the Pipeline Emergency Responders Initiative (PERI) in the state of Georgia. This groundbreaking initiative was conceived as a way to enhance communications among emergency responders, pipeline operators, and regulators. It has done that and more.

Commencing in 2014, the initiative has strengthened the relationships among the various pipeline safety stakeholders and has brought about a better understanding of stakeholders' shared responsibilities to help prevent pipeline incidents and properly respond to pipeline emergencies.

Modeled after the initiative in the state of Georgia, in 2015, the state of Alabama formed the Alabama Pipeline Emergency Responders Initiative (APERI) steering committee, with PHMSA's support. The APERI is a two-way collaboration between pipeline operators and emergency responders, strengthened by the development and implementation of comprehensive pipeline emergency response training, which will result in a significant impact on the understanding of pipeline hazards in the emergency responder community in the state of Alabama. While each state is unique and has its own set of challenges in protecting the public and the environment from the risks associated with transporting hazardous materials in pipelines, PHMSA supports the full implementation of APERI.

Improving communication between emergency responders and pipeline operators nationwide is a goal worth pursuing. Each new state initiative strengthens relationships among the various pipeline safety stakeholders and provides a better understanding of the stakeholders' shared responsibilities to help prevent and properly respond to pipeline incidents. We are highly encouraged by the success of the PERI initiative and progress being made on similar, yet distinctive programs in other states. We applaud the efforts of the state of Alabama and encourage other states to develop similar initiatives tailored to its needs.

Sincerely,

Marie Therese Dominguez