



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

Administrator

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

September 5, 2018

The Honorable Rodney F. Freylinghuysen, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed please find a report on the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) staffing within the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). House Report 115-237 requests PHMSA to report to Congress on OPS's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 staffing and hiring plans, as well as actual turnover and hiring in FY 2017, within 120 days of the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141).

Pipeline Safety inspectors are typically engineers, who are often difficult for the Government to recruit and retain when competing with private sector employers in the energy industry. In FY 2017, PHMSA increased its total staffing level by 7 (30 new hires less 23 separations), raising its staffing level from 285 to 292. This number represents 95 percent of our staffing target. The FY 2017 turnover rate was only 7.9 percent, demonstrating PHMSA's success at retaining its qualified staff.

Throughout FY 2018, PHMSA has strived to meet its full-employment target of 308 Pipeline Safety personnel. We continue to implement creative hiring solutions, including veterans outreach, multiple concurrent announcements, and partnerships with universities and their engineering departments, to find the best qualified engineers. Using these strategies, we expect to reach 308 personnel—100 percent of our goal—in FY 2018.

I have sent similar letters to the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations; the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations; and the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. If you require further information or assistance, please feel free to call me or have your staff contact Bobby Fraser, Director of the

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The Honorable Rodney F. Freylinghuysen

Office of Governmental, International and Public Affairs, by phone at 202-366-9414 or by e-mail at [bobby.fraser@dot.gov](mailto:bobby.fraser@dot.gov). I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. R. Elliott". The signature is stylized with a large "H" and a long horizontal line.

Howard R. Elliott



U.S. Department  
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**Pipeline and Hazardous  
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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

September 5, 2018

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

Dear Madam Chairman:

Enclosed please find a report on the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) staffing within the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). House Report 115-237 requests PHMSA to report to Congress on OPS's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 staffing and hiring plans, as well as actual turnover and hiring in FY 2017, within 120 days of the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141).

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The Honorable Susan Collins

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Howard R. Elliott



U.S. Department  
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**Pipeline and Hazardous  
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September 5, 2018

Administrator

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

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

Dear Congresswoman Lowey:

Enclosed please find a report on the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) staffing within the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). House Report 115-237 requests PHMSA to report to Congress on OPS's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 staffing and hiring plans, as well as actual turnover and hiring in FY 2017, within 120 days of the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141).

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The Honorable Nita M. Lowey

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September 5, 2018

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.  
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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart

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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.  
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The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

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Howard R. Elliott



U.S. Department  
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**Pipeline and Hazardous  
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September 5, 2018

Administrator

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

The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Price:

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Howard R. Elliott



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Washington, DC 20590

September 5, 2018

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

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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.  
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September 5, 2018

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

Dear Senator Leahy:

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The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy

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**Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)  
Report to Congress on the Office of Pipeline Safety's  
FY 2017 Actual Staffing and FY 2018 Hiring Plan**

**FY 2017 Actual Turnover and Hiring:**

In FY 2017, the Office of Pipeline Safety staffing increased from 285 full-time personnel on October 1, 2016 to 292 full-time personnel on September 30, 2017. PHMSA hired 30 Pipeline Safety employees. Of these 30 hires, 17 were inspection and enforcement staff and 13 were other safety staff. In the same period, 23 employees left the Office of Pipeline Safety, resulting in a net increase of 7 employees. The turnover rate was 7.9 percent, calculated using an average number of 293 employees.

**FY 2017 Pipeline Safety Staffing and Turnover**

<b>Onboard October 1, 2016<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Hiring FY 2017</b>	<b>Separations FY 2017</b>	<b>Onboard September 30, 2017</b>	<b>Turnover Rate FY 2017<sup>2</sup></b>
285	30	(23)	292	7.9%

1/ The Onboard October 1, 2016 count of 285 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 293 in FY 2017.

**Pipeline Safety Hiring Plan:**

In FY 2018, PHMSA's Office of Pipeline Safety received funding for 308 Pipeline Safety positions. As of September 30, 2017, the Office of Pipeline Safety had 292 (95 percent) of its positions filled. Of the 292 persons onboard, 205 were inspection and enforcement; of the 16 vacancies, 12 were inspection and enforcement positions.

Pipeline Safety inspectors are typically engineers, who are often difficult for the Government to recruit and retain when competing with private sector employers in the energy industry. PHMSA uses creative hiring solutions—including veterans outreach, multiple concurrent announcements, and partnerships with universities and their engineering departments—in order to compete for engineers and energy professionals.

To manage the staffing challenges, PHMSA is continuing its hiring plan that began in FY 2015, as detailed below:

- Make multiple selections using single certifications of eligible candidates. PHMSA continues to make multiple selections when possible.
- Advertise vacancies through social media (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn), which has been one of PHMSA's most successful hiring strategies, as it tends to pique the interest of engineers entering the workforce.
- Offer increased rates of pay, additional leave accrual, and recruitment and relocation incentives, when available, for candidates with superior qualifications.

- Execute a major advertising campaign to get the word out that PHMSA is hiring. As a result of this campaign, several selections have been made through our regional job postings.
- Participate in a variety of hiring and career fairs, including those for veterans, returning Peace Corps/AmeriCorps volunteers, and individuals with disabilities. This offers an excellent selection of applicants, while often allowing PHMSA to bypass a lengthy competitive hiring process.
- Hire *Transportation Specialists* in addition to engineers to staff certain functions on pipeline inspection teams. These positions are generally easier to fill.
- Utilize the OPM Pathways program to reach upcoming graduates and offer participants accelerated promotions to retain highly qualified individuals.