



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

Administrator

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

January 17, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 19(c) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-355) requires the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to report to Congress each year on any pipeline safety recommendations made by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) during the prior year and to provide a copy of PHMSA's response for each recommendation. The enclosed report is submitted in fulfillment of this requirement.

As of December 31, 2019, NTSB has issued four safety recommendations to PHMSA during calendar year 2019, as listed on the report enclosed with this letter. This report provides information on PHMSA's responses to these recommendations. We take our responsibility to address all NTSB recommendations seriously and will continue to work aggressively to close all open recommendations.

I have sent similar letters to the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or have your staff contact Benjamin Kochman, Director of Governmental, International, and Public Affairs, by phone at (202) 366-0544 or by email at benjamin.kochman@dot.gov. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Howard R. Elliott

Enclosure



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

January 17, 2020

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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I have sent similar letters to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or have your staff contact Benjamin Kochman, Director of Governmental, International, and Public Affairs, by phone at (202) 366-0544 or by email at benjamin.kochman@dot.gov. I hope this information is helpful.

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The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
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January 17, 2020

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Graves:

Section 19(c) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-355) requires the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to report to Congress each year on any pipeline safety recommendations made by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) during the prior year and to provide a copy of PHMSA's response for each recommendation. The enclosed report is submitted in fulfillment of this requirement.

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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
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January 17, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
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January 17, 2020

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Walden:

Section 19(c) of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-355) requires the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to report to Congress each year on any pipeline safety recommendations made by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) during the prior year and to provide a copy of PHMSA's response for each recommendation. The enclosed report is submitted in fulfillment of this requirement.

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ANNUAL REPORT: NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD CY 2019 RECOMMENDATIONS ON PIPELINE SAFETY

NTSB Safety Recommendation P-19-001

Recommendation: *Require that all new service regulators be installed outside occupied structures.*

Response: PHMSA believes the intent of this NTSB Recommendation can be achieved quickly under existing safety standards by implementing the following alternative actions:

- Add questions and guidance to PHMSA's distribution inspection forms. These forms guide PHMSA and state pipeline safety inspectors in their review of operators' compliance with our regulations relating to service regulators. The additional questions would have inspectors review operators' Operation and Maintenance procedures relative to the placement of service regulators;
- Modify the State Program Evaluation Form to include a question verifying that states are checking operator compliance with our regulations for inside regulators;
- Review current requirements for inside meter/regulators with operators at all state pipeline safety seminars beginning in 2020;
- Issue an Advisory Bulletin alerting operators of the requirements for inside meter/regulators, including leakage surveys, noting that if access is an issue to properly check and maintain inside regulators, operators must do what is necessary to have the customer provide access to check the regulator and conduct the leak or atmospheric corrosion survey;
- Encourage states to provide a rate rider to move regulators outside where possible; and
- Support research and development to improve service regulator design to facilitate placement in areas where very limited outside space exists.

PHMSA proposed to track the efficacy of these actions by:

- Working with the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives to determine a baseline for the number of inside regulators. PHMSA would then annually track this data to determine the rate of reduction in inside regulators;
- Reviewing incident data to identify potential trends for Material/Weld/Equipment failures involving inside regulators; and
- Reviewing Federal and state inspection and enforcement relative to compliance with the regulations.

PHMSA proposed to submit our findings to NTSB one year after the implementation of the above plan.

NTSB Safety Recommendation P-19-002

Recommendation: *Require existing interior service regulators be relocated outside occupied structures whenever the gas service line, meter, or regulator is replaced. In addition, multifamily structures should be prioritized over single-family dwellings.*

Response: Please see PHMSA's response to NTSB Safety Recommendation P-19-001, which describes the alternative actions PHMSA proposed to implement the recommendation quickly. As stated, PHMSA will measure the efficacy of these actions and report our findings to NTSB one year after plan implementation.

NTSB Safety Recommendation P-19-014

Recommendation: *Revise Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 192 to require overpressure protection for low-pressure natural gas distribution systems that cannot be defeated by a single operator error or equipment failure.*

Response: PHMSA is reviewing this recommendation and plans to send a response within the 90 days allowed by NTSB.

NTSB Safety Recommendation P-19-015

Recommendation: *Issue an alert to allow low-pressure natural gas distribution system operators of the possibility of a failure of overpressure protection; and the alert should recommend that operators use a failure modes and effects analysis or equivalent structured and systematic method to identify potential failure and take action to mitigate those identified failures.*

Response: PHMSA is reviewing this recommendation and plans to send a response within the 90 days allowed by NTSB.