

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are writing to urge swift and strong finalization of the proposed rule, “Pipeline Safety: Gas Pipeline Leak Detection and Repair,” from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). The rule is urgently needed to improve community safety and reduce methane emissions from millions of miles of pipelines across the United States, and we are concerned to see further delays in the projected finalization schedule.¹ The White House Methane Action Plan has already identified the Advanced Leak Detection & Repair rulemaking as a key priority, and the White House again prioritized these much-needed standards in its December 2023 Methane Plan Update.²

The proposed rulemaking includes the use of advanced leak detection technologies, strengthened surveying and reporting, and faster leak repairs for U.S. gas pipelines, underground gas storage facilities, and liquefied natural gas facilities. Natural gas is composed primarily of methane, and any leakage or operational releases from natural gas pipelines threaten the safety of nearby communities and contribute to the climate crisis by increasing harmful methane emissions.

This rulemaking is already far behind schedule. Congress directed PHMSA in the bipartisan PIPES Act of 2020 to finalize advanced leak detection standards by the end of 2021. After the proposed rule was released in May 2023, the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC) was expected to complete its review of the proposed rule in December 2023, but the process was extended to provide for an additional meeting in March 2024. Now that GPAC has completed review of the rule, PHMSA should act promptly to finalize the rule, consistent with the agency’s authority to set minimum pipeline standards designed to meet the need for pipeline safety and environmental protection.

We urge the Department of Transportation and PHMSA to finalize, as soon as possible, the proposed protective standards to improve public safety and cut methane pollution from gas pipelines. We look forward to working with you and your Department to achieve these objectives.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/legislative-mandates/pipes-act-web-chart>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Methane-Action-Plan-2023-Topper.pdf>

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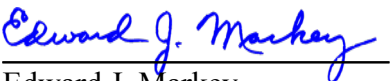
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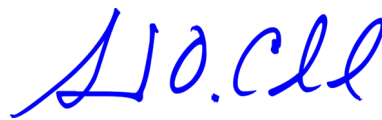
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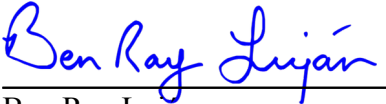
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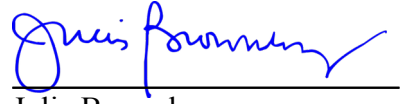
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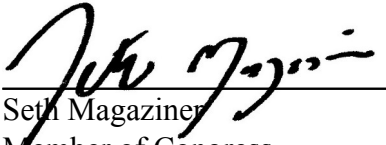
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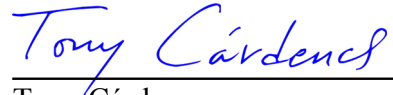
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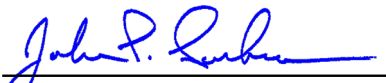
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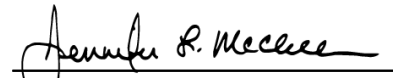
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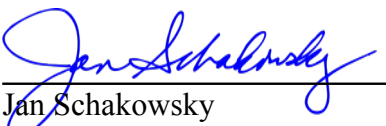
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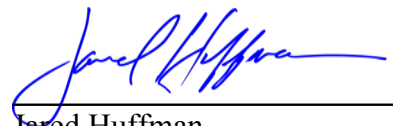
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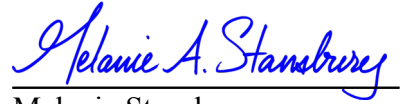
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