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TESTIMONY OF THE PIPELINE SAFETY TRUST

Presented by:

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FOR THE

Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety Subcommittee
of the
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate

Hearing on:

Pipeline Safety Reauthorization: Ensuring the Safe and Efficient Movement of American Energy

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Good morning, Committee Chair Cruz, Subcommittee Chair Young, Committee Ranking Member Cantwell, Subcommittee Ranking Member Peters, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to speak today on the vital subject of pipeline safety. My name is Bill Caram, and I am the Executive Director of the Pipeline Safety Trust.

The Pipeline Safety Trust was created after the Olympic Pipe Line tragedy in Bellingham, Washington in 1999. That entirely preventable failure spilled nearly a quarter-million gallons of gasoline into a beautiful salmon stream in the heart of our community which eventually ignited and killed three boys. The U.S. Justice Department was so appalled at the operations of the pipeline company and equally appalled at the lax oversight from the federal government, that they asked the federal courts to set aside money from the settlement to create the Pipeline Safety Trust as an independent national watchdog organization over the pipeline industry and its regulators.

We work to ensure that no other community must endure the senseless grief that Bellingham has had to experience from a pipeline tragedy. Sadly, there have been many senseless pipeline tragedies and disasters since Bellingham. I am here today, hoping that we can continue to work together to help move towards our shared goal of zero incidents.

Recent Pipeline Failures

Since this subcommittee held its markup of the last authorization of PHMSA's pipeline safety program on July 31, 2019, 67 people have been killed, and 182 people have been injured to the point of in-patient hospitalization. There have been over 3,000 reportable incidents, with over 1,500 of those deemed "significant" by PHMSA standards. That means there has been a significant incident nearly every day and more than four people killed or seriously injured every month over the last five years.

In fact, the past two years have been the deadliest for pipelines in nearly 15 years—surpassed only by the two-year period that included the devastating PG&E explosion in San Bruno, California, which killed eight people and destroyed an entire neighborhood—a time that I think all of today's witnesses would agree was a low point for pipeline safety. We continue to languish with consistently poor performance, with a significant incident almost every day and 30 people killed over the last two years.

A look at the National Transportation Safety Board's docket will give a glimpse into the current state of pipeline safety. The NTSB has eight open investigations, from a million-gallon oil spill off the coast of Mississippi, to a host of pipeline-caused explosions in Jackson, MS, Youngstown, OH, Bel Air, MD, South Jordan, UT, Avondale, LA, Hutchinson, KS, and most recently, Lexington, MO. The NTSB investigators, sadly, have their hands full.

In December, the NTSB held a Board meeting to discuss the 2023 UGI Utilities pipeline failure in West Reading, PA that resulted in an explosion that killed seven people and

injured 11.[1] Family members of the victims attended the meeting where the NTSB discussed the failed piece of pipeline infrastructure made from Aldyl A plastic. PHMSA has known these Aldyl A components are prone to failure for decades.

The NTSB is also investigating an Enbridge pipeline failure that occurred in November 2024 in South Jordan, UT that killed a 15-year-old child. The preliminary report finds that the failed pipeline was also Aldyl A.[2]

Just last year, in Jackson, MS, pipelines operated by Atmos Energy appears to have fueled two home explosions, one of which killed the 81-year-old wife of a community pastor. An NTSB preliminary report describes what appears to an under-maintained system full of leaks. Neighbors had complained repeatedly about the smell of gas. Atmos didn't find any leaks it deemed to be hazardous before the home exploded.[3]

On the hazardous liquids side, we've seen two recent failures that have contaminated drinking water wells, and another incident on a chronically failing system. An Energy Transfer pipeline in Pennsylvania was discovered to have been leaking jet fuel. Evidence suggests this pipeline may have been leaking for at least 16 months, possibly much longer, after many complaints about the taste and smell of residents' water. And in December, an Enterprise Products pipeline spilled 23,000 gallons of gasoline, contaminating nine drinking wells. And just last month, the Keystone Pipeline failed yet again, this time spilling about 110,000 gallons of crude oil in North Dakota.

This is just a selection of the approximately 1,500 significant pipeline incidents that have happened in the last five years.

5 Year Anniversary of the Denbury Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Failure in Satartia, MS

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the five-year anniversary of the harrowing carbon dioxide pipeline failure in Satartia, MS. Five years have passed since nearly 50 people went to the hospital experiencing seizures, loss of consciousness, foaming at the mouth, and many other terrifying effects of carbon dioxide exposure.[4] Denbury's failure in Satartia laid bare many glaring regulatory shortfalls that have been clearly identified, but five years later we haven't modernized the regulations. It took over 12 years for PHMSA to modernize

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[1] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *UGI Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Explosion and Fire* https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD23LR002.aspx.

[2] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Enbridge Inc. Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosion* https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD25FR001.aspx.

[3] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosions and Fires* (Feb. 14, 2024) https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/Pages/PLD24FR003.aspx.

[4] U.S. Dep't of Transp., Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin, *Failure Investigation Report – Denbury Gulf Coast Pipelines, LLC – Pipeline Rupture/Natural Force Damage* (May 26, 2022) https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/2022-05/Failure%20Investigation%20Report%20-%20Denbury%20Gulf%20Coast%20Pipeline.pdf.

regulations with lessons learned from PG&E's devastation in San Bruno. I hope it doesn't take nearly as long for PHMSA to modernize carbon dioxide pipeline safety regulations with lessons learned from Denbury's disaster.

Congressional Oversight

The Pipeline Safety Trust urges Congress to fulfill its oversight responsibilities regarding PHMSA by requesting information about the status of staff reductions. We have heard very little official news from PHMSA about how many staff members have accepted retirement offers or been terminated. We have heard from news sources about the high level of turnover at the senior leadership level, which, if true, represents an enormous drain of knowledge and experience from the agency. We haven't heard anything about the losses from elsewhere within the agency. Full staff levels at a small safety agency such as PHMSA are essential to meet responsibilities to the public.

Also, we encourage PHMSA to seek answers from PHMSA to explain the sudden drop in enforcement case initiations under the first few months of new leadership. The number of cases posted to PHMSA's Enforcement Transparency website[5] represents as much as a 90% drop in the number of cases initiated within the first months of previous administrations, regardless of party.

We firmly believe, and expect wide agreement among stakeholders, that pipeline safety is a bipartisan issue that we can all support.

Legislative Priorities to Improve Pipeline Safety

While everyone on today's panel supports the goal of zero incidents, unfortunately, we have a long way to go. I commend this subcommittee for working on pipeline safety legislation.

The Pipeline Safety Trust believes that making a meaningful difference on pipeline safety involves three components: improved safety regulations, financially meaningful enforcement, and widespread adoption of Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS). Congress can play a key role in each of these efforts.

Critical to each of these is the existence of a strong regulator, both in PHMSA and each of the state programs. Not only has the agency been chronically underfunded, Congress has also hamstrung PHMSA with statutory restrictions such as the extra burdensome cost-benefit requirement, of which PHMSA is the only safety agency laden with this onerous and overly restrictive obligation. Also, the non-application clause, forbidding PHMSA from

[5] U.S. Dep't of Transp, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin., *Summary of Enforcement Activity: Nationwide* (May 1, 2025) https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/enforcement-data/summaries.

applying certain standards from existing pipelines also prevents the agency from being as strong a regulator as necessary to ensure safe communities and a healthy environment.

For many of the legislative priorities described, there is a fact sheet with recommended legislative language included in the Appendix.

PHMSA Funding and State Programs

Beyond revoking these two restrictive provisions, Congress can empower PHMSA to be a stronger regulator by giving it the resources it needs, which involves a substantial increase in funding. PHMSA has had large increases in Congressional mandates without a corresponding increase in funding. For example, nearly 100,000 miles of gas gathering lines have finally come under PHMSA regulations and another approximately 300,000 miles are under new reporting requirements. Also on the horizon is a new generation of pipelines carrying carbon dioxide and hydrogen, requiring new expertise and personnel. State programs, responsible for oversight of more than 80% of the nation's pipeline mileage, are also feeling the squeeze on their capacity.

Because of the lack of resources, PHMSA has been reliant on the industry it is tasked to regulate for technical expertise on rulemaking. A 2015 Politico investigation[6] found that PHMSA is an agency "that lacks the manpower to inspect the nation's… oil and gas lines, that grants the industry it regulates significant power to influence the rule-making process, and that has stubbornly failed to take a more aggressive regulatory role, even when ordered by Congress to do so." PHMSA has also long had difficulty in attracting and retaining experienced personnel as the industry often hires staff away at higher salaries.

Currently, state utility commissions and state pipeline inspectors have the ability to take over direct safety authority and oversight of gas pipelines from PHMSA. State programs can be reimbursed by PHMSA for up to 80% of their spending. However, in recent years, no state has been reimbursed at the maximum level. In 2023, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) wrote a letter[7] to Congress requesting sufficient funding for PHMSA to be able to reimburse state safety grants at the 80% rate. PST agrees that state inspection programs in good standing with PHMSA should be granted 80% of their expenditures. Thus, Congress should appropriate PHMSA with enough funding to accomplish this.

[6] Andrew Restuccia & Elana Schor, *Pipelines Blow up and People Die*, POLITICO (Apr. 21, 2015) https://www.politico.com/story/2015/04/the-little-pipeline-agency-that-couldnt-217227.

[7] Letter from Greg White on behalf of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Sept. 18, 2023) (regarding pipeline safety/PHMSA reauthorization legislation.

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's PIPES Act of 2023[8] proposed a funding increase of about 10%. PST would like to see PHMSA's budget be increased by at least 30%. This recommendation is based on factors such as inflation, PHMSA's increased authority for regulating new types of pipelines, and PHMSA's historic underfunding. Inflation has increased costs 23% since PHMSA was last authorized in December 2020.[9] Accounting for inflation, a 10% increase would not even be equivalent to PHMSA's previous funding levels and would in fact place PHMSA even more behind.

Rupture Mitigation Valves

Because of the statutory limitations described above, PHMSA's improved regulations on rupture mitigation valves do not apply to existing pipelines, including on older pipes in areas that could affect densely populated or ecologically sensitive areas. Arguably these are the pipelines that need this technology the most.

In 2022, PHMSA revised its pipeline safety regulations to require rupture mitigation valves (RMVs), or alternative equivalent technologies, to newly constructed or entirely replaced onshore gas transmission, Type A gas gathering, and hazardous liquid pipelines with diameters of 6 inches or greater.[10] The rule did not, however, require operators to retrofit older pipes because of the nonapplication clause found at 49 U.S.C. § 60104(b), which prohibits PHMSA from promulgating regulations to existing facilities. Because of this, PHMSA fell short of adequately implementing the NTSB's recommendations made after the San Bruno tragedy.[11]

Excluding certain pipelines from implementation of critical safety technology based on age is dangerous. Older pipes are likely more prone to failure, and it is arbitrary to require critical safety technology on some but not all pipelines. Requiring operator to retrofit older pipelines with RMVs in high consequence areas (HCAs) would protect areas with more people and buildings that could be affected by a failure. 49 C.F.R. § 192.903. Because of the nonapplication clause, however, Congress must draft self-executing language for PHMSA to have the authority to promulgate these regulations.

Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Safety

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[8] Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety Act of 2023 (PIPES Act of 2023), H.R. 6494, 118th Cong. (2023) https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6494/text?s=2&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22pipes+2024%22%7D.

[9] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator* https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm (calculating the rate of inflation from December 2020 to March 2025).

[10] *Pipeline Safety: Requirement of Valve Installation and Minimum Rupture Detection Standards*, 87 Fed. Reg. 20,940–992 (Apr. 8, 2022).

[11] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Press Release: NTSB Issues Response to PHMSA's Valve and Rupture Detection Rule*, (Apr. 1, 2022) https://www.ntsb.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/NR20220401B.aspx.

PHMSA regulations for CO_2 pipelines lack the detail necessary to ensure the safe operation of these pipelines. Given the Congressional incentives driving carbon capture and sequestration investment, many experts expect a large increase in the mileage of the nation's carbon dioxide pipelines. Once relatively rare and remote, these pipelines could soon be much closer to people and communities. The Denbury CO_2 pipeline failure in Satartia, MS demonstrated the unique safety risks that these pipelines pose. An asphyxiant that is heavier than air, CO_2 can move as a plume in a dangerous and even lethal concentration close to the ground for long distances after a failure. Current PHMSA safety regulations are inappropriate and insufficient, as described in a Pipeline Safety Trust report.[12]

In early 2025, PHMSA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for CO_2 pipelines. PST supported the NPRM, as it contained provisions that would have drastically improved CO_2 pipeline safety but believed there was still room for improvement. Unfortunately, on January 23, 2025, the NPRM was withdrawn as part of the Trump administration's "Regulatory Freeze Pending Review" Executive Order.[13]

Congress should require PHMSA to re-issue its notice of proposed rulemaking on CO2 pipelines, accept public comment, and finalize the rule within the next eighteen months.

Hydrogen Blending Pipeline Safety

Hydrogen has been highly incentivized in recent legislation such as the Production Tax Credit in the Inflation Reduction Act. Gas distribution operators are considering blending hydrogen into existing gas distribution infrastructure and the trade group the American Gas Association includes hydrogen blends of 20% as a key component of their Net Zero plan for the industry. However, hydrogen transportation by pipeline poses many safety risks and key knowledge gaps remain. The risks run highest when the pipelines are near people. At least one operator has blended hydrogen, however that system in Hawaii is unique enough that it cannot serve as a model for the rest of the country.

Hydrogen has a much higher flammability range than methane and is known to embrittle certain types of steel and plastic pipelines. A report on blending hydrogen commissioned by the California Public Utility Commission from University of California Riverside found an alarming number of safety risks and knowledge gaps. A report by Accufacts commissioned by the Pipeline Safety Trust stated that the weakest safety link for hydrogen blends in the distribution system were the pipes inside residences.

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[12] Richard B. Kuprewicz, *Accufacts' Perspectives on the State of Federal Carbon Dioxide Transmission Pipeline Safety Regulations as it Relates to Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration within the U.S.* (Mar. 23, 2022) *available at* https://pstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3-23-22-Final-Accufacts-CO2-Pipeline-Report2.pdf.

[13] Exec. Order, *Regulatory Freeze Pending Review* (Jan. 20, 2025) https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/regulatory-freeze-pending-review/.

Congress should not allow hydrogen blends into gas distribution systems until the National Academy of Sciences has issued a report on the safety risks and knowledge gaps and PHMSA has updated its regulations.

In-Home Methane Detectors

Although pipeline operators may discover or be alerted to leaks through various activities, such as maintenance or odor complaints, these strategies will not consistently locate all hazardous leaks. When natural gas migrates through the soil into a home, the odorant may be stripped from the gas, and the resident would not be aware of the need to evacuate and alert the pipeline operator. In-home methane detectors are one method of continuous monitoring that can help the public and pipeline operators identify leaks and improve public safety. 2023 and 2024 was the deadliest two-year period for pipelines in over a decade[14], with much of those fatalities from building explosions that could have benefited from in-home methane detection.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended the use of in-home methane detectors,[15] sometimes also referred to as natural gas detectors, to alert the public of dangerous gas leaks and prevent home explosions. Methane detectors are similar to smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in that they are easy to install and relatively inexpensive. Where they differ is that they can detect a gas leak well before it ignites, preventing a potentially catastrophic explosion. Multiple NTSB investigations of home explosions have determined that the presence of an in-home methane detector could have helped mitigate the consequences.

Congress should mandate the installation of in-home methane detectors in all residential and commercial occupancies receiving gas service.

Fire Shutoff Valves

In the event of a fire in a structure that has natural gas service, gas distribution piping is often compromised and serves as fuel. This adds literal fuel to the fire and puts occupants and first responders at increased risk of injury and death. According to PHMSA, for this reason, it is necessary to quickly shut off the flow of gas to the structure.

It may take considerable time to complete the shutoff of gas, including notification of first responders and the gas company, arrival of first responders and gas company at the scene, determining the appropriate method to shut off the gas, executing shut off, and release of the gas in the pipe between the shutoff location and the structure. Reviews of

[14] U.S. Dep't of Transp., Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Admin., *Serious Incidents 20 Year Trends* https://portal.phmsa.dot.gov/analytics/saw.dll?Portalpages&PortalPath=%2Fshared%2FPDM%20Public%20Website%2F_portal%2FSC%20Incident%20Trend&Page=Serious.
[15] Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd., *Improve Pipeline Leak Detection and Mitigation* (Dec. 22, 2022) https://www.ntsb.gov/Advocacy/mwl/Pages/mwl-21-22/mwl-rph-01.aspx.

accident reports have shown that it is not unusual for this to take hours, prolonging the emergency. Use of automated shutoff valves can significantly reduce the time to shut off gas to the structure. One such device is a fire shutoff valve (FSV), also known as a thermal shutoff valve.

A typical FSV uses a spring-loaded plug held in place by a fusible link made of a low melting point alloy. When the fire shutoff valve is exposed to fire, the link melts and the spring closes the valve, shutting off the gas. FSVs are typically installed in the service line either before the regulator, before the meter, or after the meter.

FSVs are commercially available and have been used in gas service lines before the gas meter and in gas supplies to appliances. Currently, there are no federal regulations requiring their use in natural gas distribution systems. They are required in Massachusetts[16] and have been used in Germany since the 1990s. The Pipeline Safety Trust supports the widespread use of these safety devices and advocates for federal regulations that would make their use mandatory.

Congress should require PHMSA to amend 49 CFR Part 192(H) to require operators to install fire shutoff valves on all gas distribution service lines. Alternatively, congress could require PHMSA to amend 49 CFR 192.1007(b) to identify fires as a threat to their distribution system.

Financially Meaningful Enforcement

With few exceptions, civil penalties are not financially meaningful to operators. When we try to chart penalties levied on operators because of fatal pipeline failures against their quarterly earnings, we often can't even visualize the penalty since it's such a tiny percentage of earnings. Giving PHMSA more enforcement authority is critical tom improving pipeline safety.

Pipeline Safety Management Systems

Pipeline Safety Management Systems (PSMS) have been developed over the last ten years. Lessons have been incorporated and updated. When implemented properly it leads to better safety outcomes. However widespread adoption still eludes the pipeline industry.

PHMSA recently released its required report to Congress on the progress of the gas distribution pipeline industry towards adoption of PSMS. While progress has been made on total mileage of pipelines that are under control of an operator that has made a commitment to PSMS, only about half of the distribution operators have made that commitment. PHMSA also recently released an Advisory Bulletin encouraging the voluntary adoption of PSMS by the pipeline industry.

[16] General Laws of Massachusetts Part 1, Title XXII, Chapter 164, Section 75 A.

Congress could make a meaningful difference in pipeline safety by directing PHMSA to take steps towards widespread industry adoption beyond voluntary efforts.

Conclusion

As you discuss how to move forward on authorizing PHMSA's pipeline safety program and make improvements to the law, I implore you to think of the empty seats at dinner tables across the country because of pipeline failures. I've been with families who have lost their loved ones recently and some who lost their loved ones 25 years ago. I can tell you; the pain never goes away. Please give PHMSA the authority and the resources it needs to meet its responsibility to the American people.

Thank you.

Appendix – Suggested Legislative Language

1. Rupture Mitigation Valves
2. Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Safety Regulations
3. Hydrogen Blending Moratorium and Study
4. In-Home Methane Detectors
5. Fire Shutoff Valve

1. Require Rupture Mitigation Valves on Existing Pipe in High Consequence Areas

Suggested Statutory Language

Sec. __. Rupture Mitigation Valves on Existing Pipe in High Consequence Areas.

Section 60109(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(13) All operators shall replace existing pipeline or install rupture mitigation valves or alternative equivalent technologies consistent with its Final Rule, Pipeline Safety: Requirement of Valve Installation and Minimum Rupture Detection Standards, on all existing pipelines in high consequence areas."

2. Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Safety Regulations

Suggested Statutory Language

Sec. __. Carbon Dioxide Pipelines.

(a) Not later than 18 months after the date of enaction of this section, the Secretary shall finalize its rulemaking titled "Pipeline Safety: Safety of Carbon Dioxide and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines" (RIN 2137-AF60) in the Federal Register.

(b) The final rulemaking shall

- *(1) Regulate all phases of carbon dioxide transported in pipelines,*
- *(2) Establish design, installation, operation, maintenance, and reporting requirements,*
- *(3) Require plume dispersion modeling and update the process for identifying high consequence areas with vapor dispersion analysis,*
- *(4) Require contaminant monitoring and internal corrosion control standards,*
- *(5) Establish conversion of service standards,*

(6) Require emergency response training, communication, and equipment,
(7) Require geohazard mitigation, fracture mitigation, and fixed vapor detection and alarm systems,
(8) Clarify that carbon dioxide shall not be used as a testing medium for spike hydrostatic pressure testing, and
(9) Eliminate the exemption based on distance from safety related condition reporting.

3. Hydrogen Pipeline Safety Regulations

Suggested Statutory Language

Sec. __, Blending of Hydrogen in Gas Distribution Systems.—

(a) The Secretary shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences under which the National Academy of Sciences shall conduct a study of the safety risks and the potential climate effects of blending hydrogen into existing natural gas systems and issue a report outlining:

(1) remaining knowledge gaps around safely moving hydrogen blends through existing gas distribution pipeline systems

(2) safety risks of hydrogen blends in existing gas distribution systems including, but not limited to:

(A) leak rates of hydrogen blends

(B) performance of hydrogen blends in existing infrastructure

(C) underground migration of leaked hydrogen blends

(3) analysis of expected climate benefits of hydrogen blending into existing gas distribution systems

(b) Factors for Consideration.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the National Academy of Sciences shall take into consideration, as applicable--

(1) methodologies that conform to the findings from the University of California Riverside study on hydrogen blending commissioned by the California Public Utility Commission;

(2) to the extent practicable, compatibility with existing regulations of the Administration; and

(3) methodologies that maximize safety and environmental benefits

(c) Report.—The National Academy of Sciences shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report describing the results of the study under subsection (a).

(d) No operator shall begin injecting any level of hydrogen into a gas distribution system until the report under subsection (c) is delivered to Congress and its safe regulation is amended into the Pipeline Safety Act.

4. In-Home Methane Detectors

Suggested Statutory Language

Sec. ___, In-home methane detectors. A gas utility operator shall install an in-home methane detector to any of the following in which the utility provides service:
A. Each unit in any building of multifamily occupancy;
B. A fraternity house, sorority house or dormitory that is affiliated with an educational facility;
C. A children's home, emergency children's shelter, children's residential care facility, shelter for homeless children or specialized children's home.;
D. A hotel, motel or inn;
E. A mixed use occupancy that contains a dwelling unit;
F. A business occupancy;
G. A mercantile occupancy; and
H. An assembly occupancy

5. Fire Shutoff Valves

Suggested Statutory Language

Sec. ___, Requiring Fire Shutoff valves for gas distribution Service lines. —

(a) In general- Section 60110 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by inserting at the end:

6. Definitions. As used in this section:

Fire shut off valves are spring-loaded plugs held in place by a fusible link made of a low melting point alloy and attached to a gas source. When the fire shutoff valve is exposed to fire, the link melts and the spring closes the valve, shutting off the gas.

7. Not later than _____, the Secretary of Transportation shall prescribe standards on the circumstances under which an operator of a natural gas distribution system must install fire shutoff valves in the system.

8. If the Secretary decides, under subsection (2) of this section that there are circumstances under which an operator will not be required to install a fire shutoff valve on a service line in a natural gas distribution system, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the reasons for the decision not later than 30 days after the decision is made.

Alternatively

Sec. ___, Requiring Fire as a hazard for gas distribution Service lines. —

(b) In general- S 49 CFR 192.1007(b) is amended by inserting "fire," after corrosion.