



**Montana Liquid & Gas  
Pipeline Association**

**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**OF**

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MEMBER/CURRENT TREASURER**

**BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND  
MERCHANT MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**BILLINGS, MT FIELD HEARING ON “PIPELINE SAFETY: STATE AND LOCAL  
PERSPECTIVES”**

**I. Introduction**

Good morning Chairman Fischer, Senator Daines, Senator Tester, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Michelle Slyder, I am here to testify on behalf of the Montana Liquid and Gas Pipeline Association, commonly known as the MLGPA, which is comprised of 30 major pipeline operators in Montana.

Through this testimony I will share with you the specific approaches the MLGPA has implemented across the state of Montana, including many that go above and beyond the federal code requirements in regards to public awareness.

Federal code currently requires pipeline operators to perform public awareness outreach to four main stakeholder audiences: emergency responders, public officials, excavators, and the affected public. This outreach can be accomplished via many forms of engagement such as direct mail, advertising and face to face meetings. The code specifies the frequencies and content requirements and leaves the methods of outreach up to individual pipeline operators. The following testimony identifies the methods utilized by the MLGPA to address public awareness program requirements.

## **II. Emergency Responder and Public Official Outreach**

Per federal code, pipeline operators are required to deliver baseline messaging to emergency responders annually and public officials every three years. The MLGPA meets or exceeds these requirements by providing direct mail to both audiences on an annual basis via membership with the Pipeline Association for Public Awareness, referred to as PAPA. In addition to baseline messaging, the MLGPA provides emergency responders with interactive pipeline emergency response training scenarios, emergency contact directories, capabilities assessments and reports, an identified site and emergency planning application, and interoperable response procedures that can be modified to meet local requirements.

In 2007, the MLGPA began hosting more than 20 face to face meetings annually with emergency responders and public officials. Through these meetings, the MLGPA members meet with an average of over 600 stakeholders annually. This outreach is performed by the members and not contractors and is crucial to establishing the relationships necessary to ensure effective response and teamwork in the event of a pipeline release. These relationships have been built and maintained over many years by the MLGPA's commitment to meeting the expectations of the predominantly volunteer emergency responder audience. This has been achieved by securing Peace Officer Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continuing education credits to help responders meet their annual training requirements and modifying the presentation approach on an ongoing basis. For example, the original presentations contained the baseline messaging, as required by Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), but resulted in minimal engagement of the audience due to the volume of data being presented. In order to engage the audience and maintain attendance levels, it became apparent that the approach needed modification. The current meeting format includes site specific scenarios in a local tabletop exercise format and local case studies that allow emergency responders to learn from real world events. The MLGPA also accommodates volunteer participation by rotating the location and timing of the events to coincide with regular fire department meetings in rural locations.

In 2008, the MLGPA teamed with the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NSAFM) to co-sponsor the NASFM Pipeline Emergencies Train the Trainer Program in Montana. This was the first time the industry had ever engaged NASFM to cosponsor the training and there were more than 50 stakeholders in attendance, which was the highest ever achieved by any state at that time.

MLGPA members also give presentations and staff informational booths at the Volunteer Fire Chiefs annual meeting, Montana Career Fire Chiefs Association annual meeting, and Montana Disaster & Emergency Services meetings, as well as offer pipeline training opportunities for responders to participate in pipeline specific incident command structure training, tabletop exercises, boom deployments, town hall meetings and facility tours.

## **III. Excavator and Affected Public Outreach**

The MLGPA accomplishes a substantial amount of supplemental outreach to excavators and the affected public through the partnership it has developed with the Montana Utility Coordinating Council and Montana811. This outreach includes:

- Implementation of a statewide advertising campaign and effectiveness surveys utilizing over \$100,000 a year to promote the “Call Before You Dig” message to all Montana residents.
- Members of the MLGPA help staff Montana811 excavator meetings, allowing an average of 1200 excavators to meet face to face with pipeline operators every year.
- MLGPA members also assist Montana811 in staffing ag safety days and expos, home improvement shows, minor league baseball games, and University of Montana-Montana State “Cat/Griz” games.
- MLGPA members have also installed tank signs promoting “Call Before You Dig” in high visibility areas in Billings, Glendive, Logan, Missoula, Helena and Cut Bank as well as billboard style signs along many highways across the state.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The success of the MLGPA has been built on the foundation established through collaborative efforts and extensive face to face outreach with all stakeholders. The members of the MLGPA consider collaborative organizations to be a cornerstone of our success. The extensive level of stakeholder engagement in Montana proves that it is effective to allow operators the flexibility to implement common sense local strategies to address code requirements and that there is no one size fits all approach to public awareness.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today on the commitment of the members of the MLGPA to the communities in which we operate. This concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.