



Committee Members

Carl Weimer, Chair • Katie Hansen, Vice Chair
Chuck Mosher • Duane Henderson • George Hills
Grant Jensen • Jim Clark • Ken Thomas • Leo Bowman
Nate Moxley • Pete Kmet • Richard Kuprewicz • Shirley Olson

Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

For the past four years the Governor-appointed, Washington State Citizen Committee on Pipeline Safety has remained well informed and actively involved in pipeline safety issues. We have tracked these topics in Washington State and at the national level. This committee is unique in the entire nation, and we take our responsibility to provide advice to various pipeline safety stakeholders seriously. We would like to take this opportunity to provide our insights on pipeline safety as you embark on this current session of Congress.

First we would like to thank all of you who played an instrumental role in the passage of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002. Such strong congressional intervention has clearly demonstrated the importance that Congress places on pipeline safety, and certainly has provided momentum for change within the pipeline regulatory system.

We are happy to report that we agree with recent news stories, which have reported a positive change in the way the Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) carries out its responsibilities. Ever since the Olympic Pipeline tragedy in Bellingham we have seen significant improvement in the operations, partnerships, culture, and speed with which OPS gets things done. In particular OPS has moved forward aggressively on a number of important rulemakings that will do much to ensure the safety of pipelines throughout the country.

Our committee is pleased that under the leadership of Stacey Gerard, (who was recently awarded the Presidential Rank of Meritorious Executive, the highest honor the federal government can present a career civilian employee), the Office of Pipeline Safety has been able to move in the right direction. We certainly appreciate the progress that has been made, but we believe this important work is not yet complete. To continue this positive movement toward greater pipeline safety, we ask that each of you do whatever you can to promote federal action to:

- Ensure adequate funding and staffing of the Office of Pipeline Safety so they can follow through with implementation of all the initiatives they have begun and have scheduled.
- Ensure that the state regulatory partners of OPS are fairly reimbursed by OPS for the increasing workloads they are being asked to undertake.
- Provide funding for the Pipeline Safety Information Grants to Communities that were authorized in the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002, but have never had funding appropriated. These grants could create capacity for organizations such as the Washington State City and County Pipeline Safety Consortium to continue their work providing technical assistance to local governments on pipeline safety and zoning issues.
- Enact legislation to ensure every community has access to information about the safety of the pipelines beneath its streets and roads. Currently, information such as what commodities run through a pipeline, in what volumes and at what pressure, along with a pipeline company's inspection records, enforcement history, and ownership are unavailable to the public. Our committee has set Community Right to Know and Public Education as our highest priorities, but such activities are hampered by OPS's restrictions on a significant amount of important information.
- Encourage other states to form citizen pipeline safety committees like our own to help reestablish trust between citizens, regulators, local government, and pipeline operators throughout the country.

Thank you again for your past support of pipeline safety measures. What started here in Washington State has truly made a significant difference across the nation. If you ever need assistance from this committee, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely



Carl Weimer, Chair

cc: Norman Mineta, U.S. Secretary of Transportation
Samuel Bonasso, Administrator, Research and Special Programs Administration
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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
173 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Jay Inslee
United States House of Representatives 1st District
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Inslee:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Rick Larsen
United States House of Representatives 2nd District
1529 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Larsen:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Brian Baird
United States House of Representatives 3rd District
1421 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Baird:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Richard Hastings
United States House of Representatives 4th District
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hastings:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Cathy McMorris
United States House of Representatives 5th District
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McMorris:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Norman Dicks
United States House of Representatives 6th District
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Dicks:

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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable James McDermott
United States House of Representatives 7th District
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McDermott:

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1223 Longworth House Office Building
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Dear Congressman Reichert:

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First we would like to thank all of you who played an instrumental role in the passage of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002. Such strong congressional intervention has clearly demonstrated the importance that Congress places on pipeline safety, and certainly has provided momentum for change within the pipeline regulatory system.

We are happy to report that we agree with recent news stories, which have reported a positive change in the way the Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) carries out its responsibilities. Ever since the Olympic Pipeline tragedy in Bellingham we have seen significant improvement in the operations, partnerships, culture, and speed with which OPS gets things done. In particular OPS has moved forward aggressively on a number of important rulemakings that will do much to ensure the safety of pipelines throughout the country.

Our committee is pleased that under the leadership of Stacey Gerard, (who was recently awarded the Presidential Rank of Meritorious Executive, the highest honor the federal government can present a career civilian employee), the Office of Pipeline Safety has been able to move in the right direction. We certainly appreciate the progress that has been made, but we believe this important work is not yet complete. To continue this positive movement toward greater pipeline safety, we ask that each of you do whatever you can to promote federal action to:

- Ensure adequate funding and staffing of the Office of Pipeline Safety so they can follow through with implementation of all the initiatives they have begun and have scheduled.
- Ensure that the state regulatory partners of OPS are fairly reimbursed by OPS for the increasing workloads they are being asked to undertake.
- Provide funding for the Pipeline Safety Information Grants to Communities that were authorized in the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002, but have never had funding appropriated. These grants could create capacity for organizations such as the Washington State City and County Pipeline Safety Consortium to continue their work providing technical assistance to local governments on pipeline safety and zoning issues.
- Enact legislation to ensure every community has access to information about the safety of the pipelines beneath its streets and roads. Currently, information such as what commodities run through a pipeline, in what volumes and at what pressure, along with a pipeline company's inspection records, enforcement history, and ownership are unavailable to the public. Our committee has set Community Right to Know and Public Education as our highest priorities, but such activities are hampered by OPS's restrictions on a significant amount of important information.
- Encourage other states to form citizen pipeline safety committees like our own to help reestablish trust between citizens, regulators, local government, and pipeline operators throughout the country.

Thank you again for your past support of pipeline safety measures. What started here in Washington State has truly made a significant difference across the nation. If you ever need assistance from this committee, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely



Carl Weimer, Chair

cc: Norman Mineta, U.S. Secretary of Transportation
Samuel Bonasso, Administrator, Research and Special Programs Administration
Stacey Gerard, Associate Administrator, Office of Pipeline Safety
David Kerr, Staff Director, Washington City/County Consortium on Pipeline Safety



Committee Members

Carl Weimer, Chair • Katie Hansen, Vice Chair
Chuck Mosher • Duane Henderson • George Hills
Grant Jensen • Jim Clark • Ken Thomas • Leo Bowman
Nate Moxley • Pete Kmet • Richard Kuprewicz • Shirley Olson

Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

January 27, 2005

The Honorable Adam Smith
United States House of Representatives 9th District
227 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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