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Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

November 23, 2009

The Honorable, Governor Christine Gregoire

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I understand that you are in the process of finalizing your list of advisory committees for elimination during the next legislative session. On behalf of the members of the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety, I request that the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety as authorized under RCW 81.88.140 be retained. The committee was created in 2000 to “advise the state agencies and other appropriate federal and local government agencies and officials on matters relating to hazardous liquid and gas pipeline safety, routing, construction, operation and maintenance.”

As a facilitator/mediator, I became involved in pipeline safety in 2003. During the period from 2003 through 2007, I facilitated the development of a Washington Pipeline Safety network, the implementation of a pipeline awareness program, the formation of the NW Common Ground Alliance concerned with safety of underground facilities, development of the Washington State guidelines on “Land Use Planning in Proximity to Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Pipelines”, and participated as a committee member in the federally sponsored development of land use practices on a national level (PIPA – Pipeline Informed Planning Alliance). I retired in January 2008 and applied for membership in the Citizens Committee. I assumed the position of chair in May 2009.

Hazardous liquid and natural gas pipelines are a critical part of Washington’s energy infrastructure and a public safety concern. As Washington continues to grow, new energy facilities, including natural gas and hazardous liquids pipelines will be needed. These new facilities and the existing ones must be maintained and operated to the highest levels of safety if we are to be sure that the tragedy that befell the citizens of Bellingham in June 1999 never happens again.

Governor Christine Gregoire

November 16, 2009

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Since it was created in 2000, the volunteer Citizens Committee, which meets 4 to 6 times per year, has established a reputation in the "pipeline world" for educating its members, hard work and active support of the citizens of Washington on matters such as public awareness, locating of new hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines, damage prevention including the one-call system, land use around pipelines, monitoring and providing insight on major pipeline events, and providing neutral informed advice to federal, state and local agencies concerning all pipeline matters.

It should be noted that in 2002, Congress referenced the importance of such state advisory committees by requiring the federal Secretary of Transportation respond in writing within 90 days to any pipeline recommendations for improvements made by a state pipeline safety advisory committee. The Citizens Committee has often used this avenue of communication to improve federal pipeline regulations and practices that affect pipelines in this state.

As for the future, the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety is continuing to focus its work on citizen-based advocacy for pipeline safety in Washington in areas such as improvements to our state's damage prevention programs, implementation of best practices for land use in the vicinity of pipelines, review of the effectiveness of public awareness programs and response to federal, state and local pipeline safety programs and concerns.

Once more, on behalf of the members of the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety, I request that the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety as authorized under RCW 81.88.140 be retained for the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,

Signed (Bob Archey)

Bob Archey
Chair, Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety