



U.S. Department  
Of Transportation

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials  
Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

June 27, 2014

**OVERNIGHT EXPRESS MAIL**

Mr. David W. Danner  
Chairman  
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive, SW  
P.O. Box 47250  
Olympia, WA 98502

Dear Chairman Danner:

Sections 60105(e) and 60106(d) of the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Act) provide for the monitoring of State pipeline safety programs by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). This annual monitoring is to ensure compliance with the Act's requirements for State pipeline safety programs and provides information for determining the State's total point award for the PHMSA pipeline safety grant for next year.

June 2-5, 2014, representatives of PHMSA's Office of State Programs evaluated the CY 2013 Pipeline Safety program activities of both the natural gas and hazardous liquid programs conducted by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). The evaluation encompassed the validation of annual Progress Report documents submitted to PHMSA, review of the pipeline program procedures and records, and the observation of an on-site inspection of a pipeline operator conducted by your staff. Thank you for the courtesies extended to Mr. Rex Evans and Mr. Michael Thompson, PHMSA State Programs, by your staff.

PHMSA appreciates the contributions to pipeline safety by Mr. David Lykken who currently serves as the National Secretary for the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives (NAPSR) along with the many other task groups Mr. Lykken serves on. We also appreciate the work of Mr. Joe Subsits who has also served on various NAPSR committees. These efforts are extremely important in accomplishing our mutual goal of pipeline safety.

Based on the evaluation and the validation of Progress Report information, it appears the pipeline safety program is generally complying with PHMSA's requirements. If an item has not been corrected from the previous evaluation it will result in a loss of grant funding. As a result of this evaluation, I would like to bring the following items to your attention:

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1. We appreciate the hard work of the WUTC in response, investigation and assistance with the explosion that occurred in March of 2014 at the Northwest Pipeline LNG facility near Plymouth, WA. These cooperative efforts are instrumental in making sure all incidents are appropriately investigated.
2. The only issue we discovered during the program evaluation was one dealing with data reported on the annual natural gas program progress report. There was one natural gas incident that occurred late in CY2013 that was not reported on Attachment #4, therefore a one-half point deduction was made on the program evaluation.
3. We would also like to again note the excellent job done in making the pipeline safety inspection and compliance activities transparent through the WUTC website. Again, we appreciate the efforts undertaken by WUTC staff in making this information available to the public.

We are not requesting a response to this correspondence; however, if you choose to respond please provide your comments to me at the following address: 3700 S. MacArthur Blvd, Suite B, Oklahoma City, OK 73179-7612. Thank you for your contributions and continuing support of the pipeline safety program.

Sincerely,



Zach Barrett  
Director for State Programs  
Office of Pipeline Safety

cc: David Lykken, State Program Manager  
Chris Hoidal, PHMSA Western Region Director, PHMSA, PHP-500  
Rex Evans, State Programs Evaluator, PHMSA PHP-50