In 1999, a gasoline pipeline ruptured in Bellingham killing three young men and destroying an entire salmon stream. This deadly tragedy resulted in the creation of two organizations: the governor-appointed Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety (CCOPS), that advises state and federal agencies and officials on matters relating to hazardous liquid and gas pipeline safety, and the national Pipeline Safety Trust (PST), created by the victims’ families and community-funded by the criminal penalties that resulted from the explosion.

In 2016, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), the state agency charged with regulatory oversight of pipeline safety, asked CCOPS with the assistance of the PST to draft a report that would review the safety of the pipelines in Washington. This report would make recommendations for what could be changed to make our state’s pipelines even safer. As part of this review, CCOPS and the PST administered stakeholder surveys with elected officials, emergency responders, and representatives from pipeline companies operating in Washington.

The outcome of the surveys and recommendations are in the attached report, 2018 Pipeline Safety in Washington State.

This report provides recommendations that we feel are very important to the scope of work that is being done by the WUTC, CCOPS, and other pertinent groups whether local, regional, or national. One important recommendation that resulted from this report was that “the WUTC and CCOPS should work with the Washington State Legislature to amend Revised Code of Washington and/or the Washington State Department of Commerce to amend the Washington Administrative Code to require cities annexing property to show pipeline easements on maps of the areas proposed for annexation.”

In providing this report, we hope that you consider pipeline safety vital to the people of Washington state and that all effective legislation involving pipeline safety continue to be recognized, acted upon, and approved.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gregory Baruso / Chair

Rebecca Sexton-Kelly / Vice-Chair

State of Washington Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety

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