

**Statement of the Honorable Corrine Brown, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
Hearing on Implementation of the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety
Act of 2006
June 25, 2008**

The Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials will come to order.

The Subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on Implementation of the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety Act of 2006.

This will be the first hearing that the Subcommittee has held on pipeline safety since taking over jurisdiction of this issue at the beginning of this Congress.

One of the top priorities for the Committee when the Democrats took over was to expand the oversight role that was

sorely lacking, and allowing the Administration to go unchecked by Congress.

Nowhere is this oversight more necessary than the pipeline infrastructure in this country, which transports billions of gallons of fuel, natural gas, and hazardous materials. This is a critical issue as we struggle to make our nation's infrastructure safe from accidents and secure from attack. It is also clear that pipeline accidents don't just impact the community where they happen, but they can have an impact on the entire U.S. economy.

Everyday in the US, millions of gallons of fuel and other hazardous liquids travel through 2.2 million miles of pipeline that deliver these important commodities to local towns and businesses. In my home state of Florida, we have nearly 32,000

miles of pipeline, and as recently as November, we had a pipeline accident that badly injured a teenager and forced the evacuation of 3,000 homes. Sadly, my state is one of only two states that has failed to accept federally matched funds from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), but I plan on working very closely with the state to ensure that they take advantage of this opportunity.

The nation's pipeline safety program was strengthened and reauthorized through 2010 by the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety Act of 2006 (PIPES Act).

The PIPES Act required the Department of Transportation and pipeline operators to implement an integrity management program for gas distribution pipelines, and to ensure that all low stress pipelines are subject to the same standards as other

hazardous pipelines. It strengthened PHMSA's authority to ensure corrective action from pipeline operators and to help restore pipeline operations during disasters. The legislation also increased inspectors by 50 percent and required the certification of safety programs by senior company executives.

Unfortunately, PHMSA has failed to fully implement the statutory mandates contained in the PIPES Act, many of which were due by December 31, 2007. I should note, Mr. Johnson, that had I known announcing a hearing on this issue would have prompted PHMSA to get some of these things out the door, I would have held this hearing earlier. Since this hearing was announced on May 16, PHMSA has done some heavy lifting to get a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking out the door on the distribution pipeline integrity management directive, and two reports relating to corrosion control and leak detection were sent

to Congress late Monday evening. I wish we got that kind of reaction out of the Department on other issues this Subcommittee deals with.

On security matters, a DOT Inspector General's assessment of the state of pipeline security that was mandated by the PIPES Act and released last month, made it clear that much additional work was needed by PHMSA and TSA to ensure the safety of the public and the environment.

I look forward to hearing from today's panelists on what additional progress is being made by these agencies to fully implement the PIPES Act and to address the concerns raised by the Inspector General's report.

Before I yield to Mr. Shuster, I ask that Members be given 14 days to revise and extend their remarks and to permit the submission of additional statements and materials by Members and witnesses.

Without objection, so ordered.

I now yield to Mr. Shuster for his opening statement.