

**Testimony of Andrew J. Black
President & CEO
Liquid Energy Pipeline Association
before the
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials**

Hearing on “Promoting and Improving Safety and Efficient Pipeline Infrastructure”

February 25, 2025

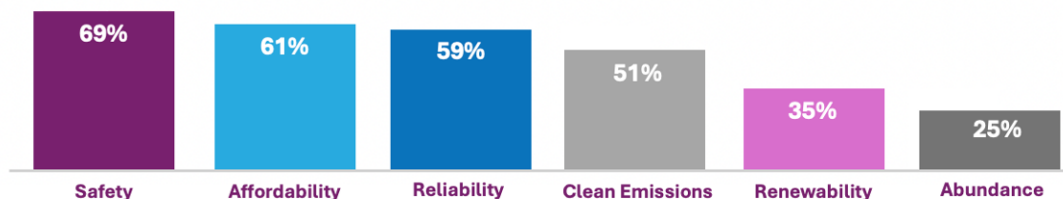
Thank you, Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Andy Black and I am President and CEO of the Liquid Energy Pipeline Association. LEPA represents pipeline owners and operators delivering transportation fuels like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, transportation feedstocks like crude oil, home heating fuels like propane and home heating oil, industrial feedstocks like ethane and butane, and low carbon solutions like renewable diesel, liquified petroleum gas and carbon dioxide. We have over 50 member companies delivering over 20 billion barrels annually across a nearly a 230,000-mile network of pipelines.

Thank you for holding this hearing today and highlighting the vital role this Committee has promoting the infrastructure that leads to American prosperity. In recent years, American families and workers have suffered from higher prices on everything from food to housing to energy. America is blessed with abundant energy supplies. Expanding American energy production will send new supply to market and pressure prices downward. Building energy infrastructure like pipelines will help us deliver more energy to the American people. The Transportation & Infrastructure Committee has an important role ensuring our pipeline network is safe, such as through pipeline safety reauthorization, allowing us confidently to expand our energy infrastructure.

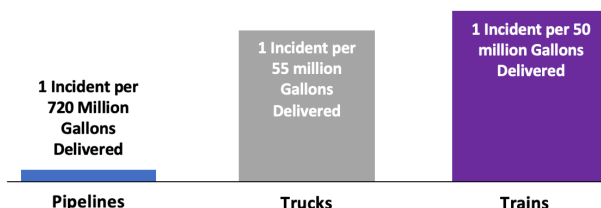
Pipelines deliver the energy products American families use every day. Liquid energy pipelines deliver transportation fuels like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel that families, commuters, businesses and travelers use to drive and fly where they need to go. Pipelines deliver transportation fuel feedstocks like crude oil and industrial feedstocks like ethane, propane and butane to make everything from plastics to pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, paints and fabrics. Rural home heating and agricultural fuels like propane delivered regionally by pipeline before traveling locally by truck heat rural homes and farms, dry crops after harvest, and keep livestock barns warm throughout the winter.

When thinking about energy, the American people tell us what they care most about is safety, followed by affordability and reliability. Each year, LEPA commissions a nationwide poll of public sentiment on energy and pipelines. The American public’s preference for safe energy supports this Committee’s work to reauthorize federal pipeline safety law.

Importance of Different Aspects of Energy

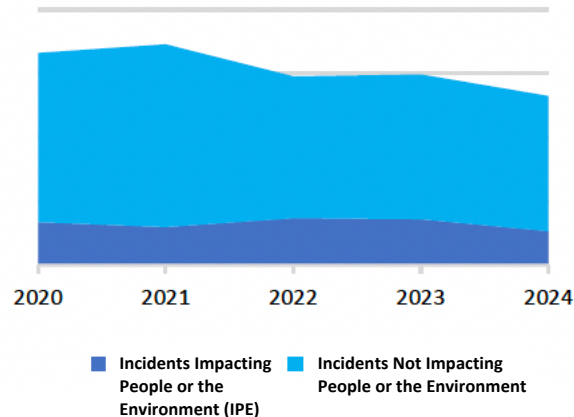


As the Committee considers the role of pipeline infrastructure and what changes to make to federal pipeline safety laws, it is important to remember pipelines are the safest way to deliver energy. More than 99.999% of crude oil and petroleum products delivered by pipeline reaches its destination safely.



A 2018 report prepared for Congress by PHMSA analyzing 10 years of incident data found pipelines were 13 times safer than both trains and trucks with pipelines experiencing 1 incident for every 720 million gallons delivered and rail incidents occurring every 50 million gallons delivered. An Obama administration analysis found rejecting a major pipeline and shipping the same crude oil by rail would increase the risk of oil release by over 800 times and barrels released by 2.6 times.

Current PHMSA pipeline incident statistics also show pipeline safety is improving. Federal law and regulations require operators to report pipeline incident data to PHMSA. Full year data for 2024 is now available, which allows us to examine current trends in pipeline safety.



According to publicly available PHMSA data, total liquids pipeline incidents are down 12% over the last 5 years. Liquids pipeline incidents Impacting People or the Environment (IPE) are also down 12% over the last 5 years. This last metric, incidents Impacting People or the Environment, was developed jointly by PHMSA, the Pipeline Safety Trust and industry under the recommendation of the National Transportation Safety Board. NTSB asked the pipeline community to identify the most meaningful metric for measuring pipeline safety. PHMSA certainly tracks many metrics but we agree that Incidents Impacting People or the Environment are the most meaningful and are gratified they are down 12% over the last 5 years.

Declining pipeline incidents over the last 5 years supports the Committee’s measured approach to reauthorizing pipeline safety laws without major changes or new mandates. LEPA does believe Congress can do more to help modernize pipeline safety programs. Hi-tech inspection and analytical tools, like an MRI or ultrasound in the doctor’s office, are available for pipeline safety. However, key parts of PHMSA safety regulations are over 20 years old and do not reflect the latest advances in safety technology or know-how.

LEPA also recognizes that America is blessed with an abundance of energy. Pipelines are the vital link from where that energy is produced, to where it is refined into usable products, and on to consumers and businesses in their home regions. Smart pipeline policies will promote the pipeline energy infrastructure needed to deliver American energy dominance. Lastly, LEPA believes Congress can help PHMSA increase the effectiveness and transparency of its pipeline safety programs and requirements.

LEPA welcomed and supported the pipeline safety reauthorization bill the Committee approved in December 2023. Provisions LEPA supported included:

- Reforming PHMSA Special Permit program to impose permit review shot clock and limit unrelated permit requirements (Sec. 17)

- Strengthening penalties for pipeline safety violations that impair operation of facilities or damage construction sites (Sec. 21)
- Requiring PHMSA issue Congressionally mandated rulemaking on idled pipelines (Sec. 12)
- Providing defendants the opportunity for a formal PHMSA hearing, and protect security or commercially sensitive information presented as evidence in PHMSA hearings open to the public (Sec. 26)
- Authorizing a Voluntary Information Sharing program to convene stakeholders to collaborate on safety initiatives (Sec. 24)
- Requiring risk-based inspections of in-service breakout tanks to reduce unnecessary greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions, worker safety threats, and hazardous waste when shown to achieve an equivalent level of safety (Sec. 28)
- Improving pipeline expertise of PHMSA personnel with hiring authority for engineering, scientific or other technical expertise (Sec. 4)
- Increasing transparency of PHMSA inspection program with reporting on inspection priorities, dates and locations (Sec. 7)
- Require PHMSA review of consensus safety improvement standards (Sec. 6)
- Targeted update of federal CO2 pipeline requirements to extend regulatory coverage to gaseous CO2, require CO2-specific incident dispersion modeling (topography, weather, operating conditions, trace compounds), require PHMSA complete rulemaking within 1 yr. (Sec. 25)

One final note on leveraging new technologies. In the 2020 PIPES Act, Congress recognized pipeline safety could benefit from harnessing the latest hi-tech inspection technologies and analytics. Congress authorized PHMSA to conduct a pipeline safety technology demonstration pilot program under certain conditions.

However, in implementing the technology demonstration program, PHMSA under the previous administration added a host of additional administrative, regulatory and legal conditions to the program beyond what Congress itself mandated. As a result, PHMSA received no applications to conduct technology pilots and the program sunseted. Pipeline operators cited the additional conditions PHMSA imposed in its implementation guidance as making the program infeasible. PHMSA bureaucratic red tape effectively strangled this program in its crib. An opportunity now exists and LEPA supports restoring the will of Congress and reauthorizing this program without additional bureaucratic red tape or conditions.

Thank you again for the Committee's support of pipeline energy infrastructure and the opportunity to testify before you today on the benefits of pipelines, including their safety.

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