

**SHORT SUMMARY OF  
H.R. \_\_\_\_\_, THE “PROTECTING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE OF PIPELINES  
AND ENHANCING SAFETY ACT OF 2016” (PIPES ACT)**

*Prepared by Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Democratic Staff  
April 14, 2016*

H.R. \_\_\_\_\_, the “Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act of 2016” (PIPES Act) authorizes \$696 million over four years (FY2016 – FY2019) for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration’s (PHMSA) administrative expenses and pipeline safety program, including \$211 million in grants to States. The bill makes significant improvements to the pipeline safety program.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LEGISLATION**

**Emergency Order Authority:** The bill provides the Secretary of Transportation with new authority to impose certain emergency restrictions and safety measures on pipeline operators to address an imminent hazard resulting from an incident or an unsafe practice. It is similar to the Federal Railroad Administration’s emergency authority, which was recently used to require railroads to adopt certain safety measures for the transportation of crude oil.

**Safety Data Sheets:** The bill requires oil pipeline operators to provide Federal and state investigators with Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) within six hours of an oil spill. SDSs provide the exact composition of the product that is being transported and include specific information on proper emergency response.

**Implementation of Statutory Mandates:** PHMSA has not completed rulemakings required by Congress in the 2012 pipeline safety reauthorization act. To help move these rulemakings forward, but not tie PHMSA’s hands from regulating pipeline safety, the bill requires PHMSA to report to Congress every 60 days on the status of all statutory mandates until each mandate is completed.

**Improvements to State Programs:** The bill boosts funding for grants to States to help them administer their pipeline safety programs. It also streamlines the process for States to receive grants and allows States to participate in joint inspections with PHMSA on interstate pipeline facilities. The bill also provides \$1.1 million annually for One-Call grants to help States protect residents and communities from pipeline accidents caused by excavation.

**Underground Natural Gas Storage Facilities:** In response to the Aliso Canyon, California methane leak, the bill requires PHMSA to establish safety standards for underground natural gas storage tanks. The provision ensures that States have the authority to go above and beyond Federal regulations for regulating intrastate facilities. It also imposes a fee on operators of underground natural gas storage facilities to support the Federal underground natural gas storage safety program.

**Pipeline Information Grants to Communities:** The bill provides \$1.5 million annually for grants to local communities and pipeline safety advocacy groups to conduct pipeline studies and public awareness campaigns.

**Oil Spill Response Plans and High Consequence Areas:** The bill ensures that pipeline operators consider the impact of oil spills into navigable waters or adjoining shorelines in developing their oil spill response plans, and ensures the Great Lakes and marine coastal areas are considered high-consequence areas. This requirement ensures that pipeline operators are regularly inspecting pipelines in these areas and making necessary repairs.