

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Ranking Member Diana DeGette**  
  
***Markup of 28 Bills, Full Committee***  
  
**March 20, 2024**

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration or PHMSA (FIHM-SUH) is charged with regulating the safety of onshore pipelines in this United States, overseeing the safety of nearly 3.4 million miles of pipelines that reach across the country. These pipelines carry hazardous materials like oil, gas, and other means of energy production to where they need to go. PHMSA sets the safety standards pipelines must comply with and inspects interstate pipelines.

In 2020, Congress passed the PIPES Act of 2020, which reauthorized PHMSA’s pipeline safety activities for three years. The safety provisions included in that law are very important. They mandate pipeline operators to carry out leak detection and repair programs on their own pipelines, require strengthened standards for the safety of LNG facilities, and expand safety requirements and regulations to nearly 500,000 miles of gathering pipelines.

In an ideal world, the average American would be blissfully unaware of pipelines because they are quietly doing their job for us. But unfortunately, as the American people have seen all too often, pipelines can be dangerous, especially when neglected. On average, there are over 600 pipeline safety incidents each year, resulting in 31 injuries and 10 deaths.

With the pipeline safety authorization bill enacted in 2020 set to expire last September, Ranking Member Pallone and I sent a letter to Chairs Rodgers and Duncan that month requesting the Energy, Climate and Grid Security Subcommittee immediately hold an oversight hearing of PHMSA’s pipeline safety programs. Despite our letter, the only action the majority took on pipeline safety in 2023 was releasing a partisan draft bill we are considering today, the “Pipeline Safety, Modernization, and Expansion Act of 2023.”

A bill that, despite its name including “safety”, has several sections completely unrelated to PHMSA pipeline safety. This bill, rather, contains provisions to increase the construction and operation of pipelines. It would streamline the permitting process, all while authorizing a funding level \$42 million below current funding levels, stripping PHMSA of critical funding and safety measures.

This process is a departure from the typical bipartisan reauthorization process and is the opposite approach from how Committee Democrats proceeded with PHMSA reauthorization four years ago when we were in the majority.

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Now, the Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee shares pipeline safety jurisdiction with the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee. And we can look to the T&I Committee for an example of bipartisanship and adherence to regular order. Last December, following their oversight hearing in March 2023, that Committee released their bipartisan pipeline safety reauthorization bill, H.R. 6494, the PIPES Act of 2023.

That bipartisan legislation reauthorizes PHMSA's pipeline safety programs for the next four years and provides an efficient and effective framework to advance the safety of energy infrastructure across the nation. It advances both traditional and emerging fuels and technology, improves PHMSA's safety mission, and fosters collaboration and transparency in and between PHMSA and industry.

As I stated back in January during a Subcommittee hearing on this bill, the partisanship from our Committee only serves to increase the amount of time it will take to reauthorize important pipeline safety measures.

The Energy and Commerce Committee is also marking up five anti-efficiency bills that would delay and weaken popular energy efficiency programs. Each of these bills is intended to undermine the Department of Energy's (DOE's) ability to finalize and enforce efficiency standards related to different household appliances now and several would prohibit similar regulation in the future. They each target the energy conservation standards program established in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which would impede DOE's ability to finalize and enforce efficiency standards for clothes washers, dryers, refrigerators, dishwashers, and room air conditioners.

None of these bills have received a legislative hearing. These bills will hurt the average consumer. Thanks to actions taken and planned by the Biden Administration, Americans will save \$570 billion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 2.4 billion metric tons over the next 30 years. Newly proposed standards for water heaters alone could save households over \$200 a year. And yet, my colleagues are insistent on standing in the way of this progress.

On a different note, I want to thank Chairwoman Rodgers for her leadership on the DeOndra Dixon INCLUDE Project Act. This bill will specifically authorize a key NIH project focused on ensuring people with Down syndrome are included in medical research that can help them and us all, and I'm pleased we are considering it today.

I yield back.