

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
“Legislative Hearing to Examine Pipeline Safety Reauthorization”
March 1, 2016**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Pipeline safety is something I take very personally, and it has long been a priority for me, and this committee. Spills can prove disastrous, and it is imperative that our laws stay up to date and work to minimize potential damage, as well as try to prevent them from happening in the first place.

In the wake of the serious oil spill that affected the Kalamazoo River in my district, I worked on a bipartisan basis with my friend John Dingell – and in conjunction with our friends on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee - to enact the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011. While the legislation’s name might be hard to remember, its positive effects are not. This bipartisan bill helps prevent pipeline failures, strengthens safety standards, and holds those responsible for pipeline accidents accountable.

We cannot achieve the intended objectives of the Pipeline Safety Act until it has been fully implemented. A hearing last July revealed that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has failed to implement many of the mandates required by law under the Pipeline Safety Act of 2011. Today, over four years after enactment, at least 16 important safety regulations remain overdue. Rulemakings related to leak detection and emergency shutoff valves, public education and awareness, and accident and incident notification are among some of the mandates PHMSA has failed to implement and which would greatly improve pipeline safety.

The discussion draft before us today, the Pipeline Safety Act of 2016, is a starting point in reauthorizing the 2011 law. The draft seeks to increase regulatory transparency, speed the completion of overdue safety regulations, tighten standards for underground natural gas storage facilities and underwater oil pipelines, and reauthorize PHMSA’s pipeline safety programs. Taken together, I believe the provisions included within the draft will go a long way toward improving pipeline safety increasing the public confidence in our nation’s energy infrastructure.

As we learned when examining the Kalamazoo spill, we needed to do a lot better job to improve pipeline safety. We have made progress, much work remains, and this draft bill is an important step forward.

I’m hopeful the testimony and feedback provided by our witnesses today will place us on a path toward enacting a bipartisan and meaningful reauthorization bill. I also look forward to continue to working with our colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as we move ahead.

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