

Chair Jeff Duncan
**Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid
Security:**
**“Fueling America’s Economy: Legislation to Improve Safety and
Expand U.S. Pipeline Infrastructure.”**
January 18, 2024
As prepared for delivery

Thank you all for being here today and welcome to the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee hearing titled, “Fueling America’s Economy: Legislation to Improve Safety and Expand U.S. Pipeline Infrastructure.”

Today we will be examining, a discussion draft released by Chair Rodgers and myself to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s (PHMSA) pipeline safety program for five years and update policies to construct and operate pipelines.

PHMSA is an agency under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) that develops and enforces federal safety regulations for the nation’s pipeline infrastructure and the transportation of hazardous materials.

Pipelines are the safest and most efficient modes of transport for fuels and feedstocks that power our nation’s economy.

According to a [2019 PHMSA report to Congress](#), pipelines delivered 180 million gallons of energy per incident while trucks delivered only 55 million gallons per incident and trains only 50 million gallons.

PHMSA and States must coordinate to ensure the nation’s existing 3.4 million miles of pipelines are operated and maintained in a safe and reliable manner.

PHMSA also has a critical role to play in reviewing proposals for new pipelines and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities within a timely manner.

I am glad we have PHMSA Deputy Administrator, Tristan Brown, here today to discuss PHMSA’s current operations and the agency’s implementation of the *Protecting Our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2020*.

This Committee has a responsibility to ensure PHMSA complies with its statutory authorities and maintains a strong focus on public safety.

I have concerns that under this administration, PHMSA is getting away from pipeline safety and toward climate activism.

It has become an unfortunate theme throughout the Biden Administration that agencies are acting outside the scope of their congressionally directed responsibilities by proposing climate change regulations.

The apparent goal of the Biden Administration is to “keep fossil fuels in the ground” or at least make them so expensive that the American people cannot afford them.

We’ve seen it through actions at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE), and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Just last week, the press revealed that DOE is secretly “pausing” LNG export permits while it conducts duplicative and repetitive environmental reviews...another move to stop US energy production.

The Biden Administration’s disdain for fossil fuels and pipelines is putting lives at risk. Under President Biden, PHMSA has gone three years without nominee to lead the agency. That’s a record vacancy.

PHMSA is currently lead by Deputy Administrator Brown, who I am glad is here to speak to these concerns as well the numerous overdue Congressional mandates and open rulemakings that have yet to be finalized by PHMSA.

As a result of the current state of PHMSA and American energy infrastructure, Chair Rodgers and I have released draft legislation which reflects a comprehensive approach to reauthorize PHMSA safety programs and update policies for pipeline permitting.

It is no secret the United States is in desperate need of expanded pipeline energy infrastructure.

My home state of South Carolina is facing an impending energy crisis in part due to the lack of pipeline infrastructure required to bring clean energy to the state.

Pipelines all over the country have been delayed and ultimately cancelled as result of permitting challenges and lawsuits funded and backed by radical environmental groups.

My draft legislation addresses this by strengthening penalties for damaging pipelines and incorporated permitting reform centered on safety, modernization, and expansion.

It improves pipelines safety by updating PHMSA programs to reflect new technologies.... It puts an end to the “gas bans” by protecting the American people’s right to choose the energy source that fits their needs.

Pipelines are essential to the energy security of the United States. If we don’t have the necessary infrastructure to deliver oil and natural gas from American producers to energy consumers we will undercut our energy security and force reliance on our adversaries for energy.

I look forward to our hearing today and recognize Ranking Member DeGette for five minutes.