



June 2019

Summary of Legislation

H.R. 3432, the Safer Pipelines Act of 2019

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

The Act may be cited as the “Safer Pipelines Act of 2019”.

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Renews and increases expiring authorizations of appropriations for pipeline safety activities overseen by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA).

SECTION 3. PURPOSE AND GENERAL AUTHORITY.

Removes duplicative statutory cost-benefit requirements imposed solely on PHMSA and no other federal agency. Major pipeline safety rules would still be subject to the same economic analysis by the Office of Management and Budget applied to every other major rule. Also ensures local first responders and onsite coordinators are provided safety condition reports.

SECTION 4. RISK ANALYSIS AND INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.

Requires PHMSA to promulgate regulations that prioritize assessment methods for transmission pipelines that would provide a greater level of safety than direct assessment, including the use of internal inspection devices or pressure testing. Also requires a report on methods of assessment of distribution pipelines other than direct assessment to determine whether any such methods are feasible and would provide an equal or greater level of safety. Further requires, subject to a risk assessment, each operator of a transmission pipeline facility in a high consequence area to install automatic or remote shutoff valves, as appropriate, no later than two years after enactment of the bill, unless PHMSA finalizes a regulation on automatic or remote shutoff valves, as required by current law.

SECTION 5. COMMUNITY RIGHT-TO-KNOW AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.

Requires owners and operators of gas or hazardous liquid pipeline facilities to make critical operational information available to surrounding communities and first responders.

SECTION 6. ACTIONS BY PRIVATE PERSONS.

Guarantees an individual’s ability to bring civil action against PHMSA to compel the Secretary of Transportation to carry out his or her nondiscretionary duties.

SECTION 7. CIVIL PENALTIES.

Increases PHMSA’s civil penalty authority and removes the cap on total penalties in existing law.

SECTION 8. CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

Changes PHMSA's criminal penalty standard from "knowingly and willfully" to "knowingly or recklessly".

SECTION 9. DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY FOR PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION.

Grants PHMSA enhanced authority to hire individuals for roles that will allow increased activities relating to pipeline safety.

SECTION 10. REPORT.

Requires PHMSA to issue a report to Congress detailing efforts of the Administration to hire women, minorities, and veterans as inspectors since January 1, 2012.