

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 29, 2015

Honorable John Thune  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Commerce, Science and Transportation  
716 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

Thank you for your leadership and oversight of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the federal government's responsibility in ensuring the safe and environmentally sound transportation of natural resources through America's pipelines, railroads, highways, waterways, and airspace.

Pipelines represent one of the safest modes of transporting oil and other hazardous materials across our nation. PHMSA is primarily responsible for training both federal and state pipeline inspectors, maintaining pipeline safety standards, as well as establishing and enforcing design, construction, and operation regulations for pipelines. The agency's jurisdiction covers approximately 2.6 million miles of pipeline and all railroads across the United States, with approximately 40,000 miles of pipeline and nearly 8,000 miles of railroad across our home states of Montana and Nebraska.

As the Chairman and a Member of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, we share your deep commitment to the safe and environmentally sound transportation of our natural resources.

With PHMSA's authorization expiring on September 30, 2015, and in light of recent accidents in eastern Montana and the density of PHMSA's jurisdiction in the region, we request a field hearing to examine PHMSA's reauthorization and its efficacy in overseeing and enforcing federal regulations on September 18, 2015, in Billings, Montana. In recent years, Montana, in particular, has experienced serious concerns related to pipeline safety, making it an important location to examine these issues. Nebraska, as well as other western states, face similar concerns regarding the transport of hazardous materials.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you on increasing safety and efficiency in all facets of hazardous material transportation.

Sincerely,



DEB FISCHER  
Chair, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, and  
Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator