

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 20, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write regarding the absence of a permanent head of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). This Agency plays a vital role in protecting communities across our states and supporting economic development. We respectfully request that you act quickly to nominate an administrator for PHMSA so that the Senate can confirm an individual to this key position.

The most recent permanent administrator left the position in October, more than 220 days ago. Given PHMSA's responsibilities of regulating approximately 2.6 million miles of pipelines that carry natural gas, crude oil, gasoline and other hazardous liquids all over our country, and the critical role the agency plays in regulating crude-by-rail, we are concerned that we still do not have a permanent administrator to lead the Agency. PHMSA's responsibilities are incredibly important, and we need a fully empowered administrator to lead this agency.

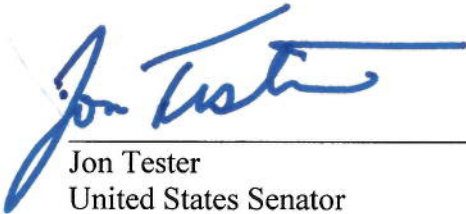
Our states have unfortunately experienced first-hand what happens when old pipelines break. These types of spills highlight the importance of proper oversight and sensible regulations. We rely on pipelines to transport a wide array of products across the country and expect them to be delivered safely. That responsibility grows in size and scope every year as our infrastructure ages and our oil and gas production increases. The recently released Quadrennial Energy Review highlights the substantial need to upgrade the United States' aging energy infrastructure. Additionally, several of our states have experienced crude-by-rail accidents in recent years, emphasizing the need to work to prevent future accidents and reduce the impacts to our communities and the environment when accidents do occur.

We realize that having a permanent administrator is not a cure-all, and that the Agency needs adequate resources to carry out its mission. However, Congress provided increased funding to the Agency this year, and we support the Administration's request to significantly increase funding for pipeline and crude-by-rail safety. It is not realistic to think we can expect PHMSA to drastically increase inspections or keep up with these evolving industries without making sensible investments in the Agency.

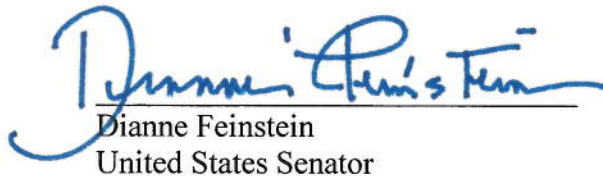
It is important to states like ours that PHMSA have a permanent administrator to ensure accountability, to develop long-term plans for pipeline transport and crude-by-rail safety, and to respond quickly when things unfortunately go wrong. We rely on this Agency to protect our citizens and our environment from damaging spills and accidents, while also ensuring the flow of energy products to those who need them. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that you submit a nomination for PHMSA administrator as soon as practical.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



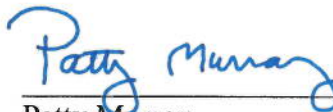
Jon Tester
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



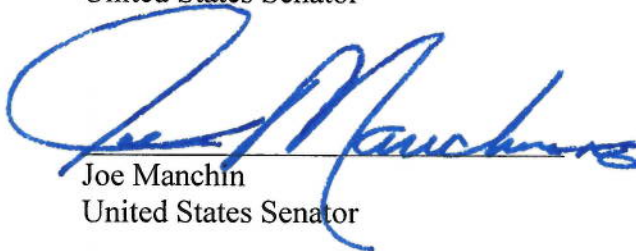
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator



Joe Manchin
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator