

EDWARD J. MARKEY  
MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEES:

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

RANKING MEMBER:

SUPERFUND, WASTE MANAGEMENT, AND  
REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

FOREIGN RELATIONS

RANKING MEMBER:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA  
AND GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CHAIRMAN:

U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE CLEARINGHOUSE

## United States Senate

SUITE SD-255  
DIRKSEN BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2107  
202-224-2742

975 JFK FEDERAL BUILDING  
15 NEW SUDBURY STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02203  
617-565-8519

222 MILLIKEN BOULEVARD, SUITE 312  
FALL RIVER, MA 02721  
508-677-0523

1550 MAIN STREET, 4TH FLOOR  
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101  
413-785-4610

May 21, 2015

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
254 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,  
Science, and Transportation  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

On Tuesday, the Santa Barbara coast became the latest casualty of a failed oil pipeline. Crude oil has coated pristine beaches and some has reached the ocean, further spreading the damage. Although the investigation as to cause of this event is still ongoing, records from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) indicate that the pipeline operator, Plains Pipeline, has had a number of violations and penalties over the last decade. A Los Angeles Times analysis indicates that Plains Pipeline's incidents per mile of pipeline is three times the national average. While they have been assessed penalties amounting to more than \$100,000 during the last 10 years, Plains Pipeline reported nearly \$900 million in profits in 2014 alone.

Unfortunately, stories about pipelines leaking oil or causing natural gas explosions are becoming more commonplace. As members of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over PHMSA and pipeline safety, it is our responsibility to ensure that PHMSA is doing their job to oversee the oil and natural gas pipeline network that is vital to our national economy. We must also make sure that PHMSA has the tools they need to keep companies operating their pipelines in a safe manner. I respectfully request that the Commerce Committee hold a hearing to investigate the state of our national pipeline infrastructure and what is needed to keep it functioning in a way that does not threaten public health, safety or the environment. Given the need to reauthorize pipeline safety legislation this year, we must understand the current state of pipeline infrastructure and the effectiveness of the agency charged with overseeing it.

Leaking pipelines are not just a threat to public safety and the environment, they also cost consumers money. In 2012, I released a report that showed leaking natural gas pipelines are

costing American consumers tens of billions of dollars for fuel that may never reach their homes. For example, consumers in Massachusetts paid up to \$1.5 billion in extra charges from 2000-2011 for natural gas that they may have never received because of tens of thousands of miles of old, leaking pipelines. In an effort to address some of these problems, I have introduced two bills -- S. 1208, the Pipeline Modernization and Consumer Protection Act and S. 1209, the Pipeline Revolving Fund and Job Creation Act -- that have been referred to the Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with you to advance these and other solutions to increase the safety of America's pipeline network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senator