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## United States Senate

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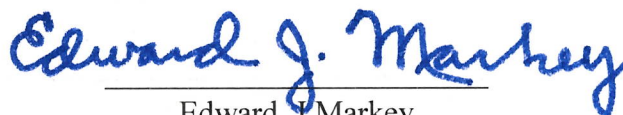
The Honorable Howard "Skip" Elliott  
Administrator  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Elliott,

On September 13, 2018 natural gas explosions in Lawrence, North Andover, and Andover, Massachusetts caused more than 70 fires, injured at least 25 people, and caused one fatality. I write today to ask that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) immediately request a study from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) on the safety of distribution pipeline systems.

The NASEM has published three studies in the past two years focused on pipeline systems, including *Designing Safety Regulations for High-Hazard Industries (2018)*, *Safety Regulation for Small LPG Distribution Systems (2018)*, and *Safely Transporting Hazardous Liquids and Gases in a Changing U.S. Energy Landscape (2017)*. To complete *Safety Regulation for Small LPG Distribution Systems (2018)* at the request of PHMSA, the NASEM convened a committee of 9 experts in liquefied petroleum pipeline (LPG) operations and safety regulation, transportation safety, subsurface utility engineering, law, public policy, risk analysis, and emergency response. That expert committee convened four times over a 9 month period for data-gathering sessions that were open to the public, and included briefings from PHMSA officials, state regulators, LPG industry representatives, pipeline installers and operators, and engineers. The final agendas for those meetings will be included in the final report. As the Merrimack Valley continues to recover from these terrible events, I ask that PHMSA immediately request that the NASEM examine the issue of safety regulation for natural gas distribution systems.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator