December 7, 2006

Dear Chairman Stevens and Ranking Member Inouye,

I wanted to thank you again for the opportunity to testify regarding pipeline safety at the hearing you held in November. As I said at the time the bill you introduced moved pipeline safety forward on many fronts.

Just yesterday the U.S. House passed HR 5782, which in our opinion included the best parts of all the bills introduced in Congress this year, including many of the significant pieces unique to your own legislation. It is our understanding that the House bill has been vetted with the members of your committee for approval, and will be voted on by the entire Senate on Friday. We support this bill and hope you will urge your colleagues in the Senate to approve it.

The bill that was passed by the House takes significant steps to increase overall pipeline safety by providing regulatory coverage of low stress pipelines, ensuring that distribution pipelines will soon fall under integrity management rules, increasing funding to states so they can improve their damage prevention activities and enforcement, providing greater transparency on PHMSA’s enforcement program, mandating the use of excess flow valves as the NTSB has requested, requiring a report on possible inadequacies in current leak detection systems, and providing technical assistance grants to affected communities. We applaud these measures and others in this bipartisan bill.

Please feel free to share this letter of support with others in the Senate if you think it will help convince them of the importance of this pipeline safety bill. If we can be of any further assistance please call on us. Thank you again for all your work to improve pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Carl Weimer
Executive Director