



Credible.
Independent.
In the public interest.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kenneth Clarkson
Communications & Outreach Director
kenneth@pstrust.org
360-543-5686 x104

NEWS RELEASE

Pipeline Safety Trust Releases Paper Detailing Significant Safety Risks and Massive Regulatory Shortfalls in Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Regulation

BELLINGHAM, Washington [March 30, 2022] – In response to the recent flurry of multibillion-dollar CO₂ pipeline proposals driven by the expanded tax credit incentives provided by the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure bill, The Pipeline Safety Trust (PST) released a report prepared by the independent consultant Accufacts highlighting the multitude of issues a major CO₂ pipeline buildout poses.

Carbon dioxide has different physical properties from products typically moved in our current hazardous hydrocarbon liquid or natural gas transmission pipeline system. Those differences pose unique safety hazards to the public.

“CO₂ is an asphyxiant which is heavier than air and therefore, after a pipeline rupture, a plume can maintain a lethal concentration over large distances,” PST executive director Bill Caram said. “There are little to no regulations around appropriate siting, limiting dangerous and corrosive impurities, or building the pipelines to withstand the unique properties of transporting high pressure CO₂.”

PST believes existing federal regulations do not allow for the safe transportation of CO₂ via pipelines and calls on the Pipeline Hazardous Materials and Safety Administration (PHMSA) to update its regulations of CO₂ pipelines as quickly as possible.

PHMSA currently exercises no jurisdiction over pipelines transporting CO₂ as a gas or liquid, and only regulates CO₂ pipelines with a concentration of more than 90% carbon dioxide compressed to a supercritical state, rendering any pipeline moving CO₂ in any other state or with less than 90% purity entirely unregulated by the federal pipeline safety agency. There are also no regulations requiring the addition of an odorant to help detect leaks and ruptures, establishing an appropriate process for determining a potential impact area in case of a rupture, limiting dangerous impurities, or several other common-sense regulatory needs.

“We hope this report highlights the multitude of unique risks and regulatory shortfalls of CO₂ pipelines and we call on PHMSA to close these regulatory absences as quickly as possible to make the upcoming buildout safer to the people who will live around them,” Caram said.