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For more information contact:

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

Mid Valley Pipeline Leaks Over 200,000 Gallons of Crude Oil into Horse Creek in Henderson, TN

The Pipeline Incident is the Second Largest Crude Oil Spill Recorded in the History of Tennessee

BELLINGHAM, Washington [July 5, 2022] – On June 29, Energy Transfer Partner’s Mid Valley Pipeline ruptured when a secondary party damaged the transmission pipeline carrying crude oil. The damage resulted in the discharge of approximately 4,800 barrels of crude, equivalent to 201,600 gallons into the surrounding area, including a local creek.

Initially estimated at 21,000 gallons, as clean-up operations started, the number of gallons leaked shot up to 201,600. The spill is the second largest recorded crude oil spill in Tennessee history according to PHMSA’s Incident Data for Hazardous Liquids, which dates back to 1986. The last spill of this magnitude was a 357,000-gallon spill in Clarksville, TN in 1988 on the very same pipeline system.

The spill occurred in the small community of Henderson, TN northeast of Memphis. According to an update by Mid Valley Pipeline Company, the crude oil had entered both the creek and its surrounding habitat.

According to the Chester County Emergency Management Agency a worker using a mower to clear the pipeline’s right-of-way instead hit the pipeline, which suggests the pipeline could have been exposed or close to the surface. Regulations do not require operators to maintain a depth of cover over their pipelines. However, if a pipeline is located in a high consequence area (HCA) or if a spill could affect an HCA, operators are required to identify and mitigate any threats to their system.

“It couldn’t be more important to keep our water safe from the hazards of pipelines. Safety regulators need to require operators to maintain a safe depth of cover on all their pipelines, especially those that could impact our treasured sources of water,” Pipeline Safety Trust Executive Director Bill Caram said.

Various Tennessee state agencies were notified of the spill in addition to the following federal agencies: Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), EPA, and The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB).

At this time, Horse Creek remains dammed as crews continue to work to remediate the area. The National Response Center notes that the pipeline has been "controlled and repaired" and crews are also using vacuum trucks to recover free product.

About Pipeline Safety Trust: The Pipeline Safety Trust is a nonprofit public watchdog promoting pipeline safety through education and advocacy by increasing access to information, and by building partnerships with residents, safety advocates, government and industry, that result in safer communities and a healthier environment.

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