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PST Strongly Supports Sen. Markey's Pipeline Accountability, Safety, and Environmental Standards Act of 2024

The bill will make significant progress on pipeline safety by targeting the root legal and regulatory hurdles that stand in the way of reaching zero pipeline incidents.

WASHINGTON - [Aug. 1, 2024] – Today Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass) introduced important legislation that would make our nation's pipelines safer. The bill, titled the Pipeline Accountability, Safety, and Environmental Standards Act of 2024, contains several key provisions that address the all-too-frequent issues of pipeline leaks, ruptures, and other failures that continue to wreak havoc on our communities and environment.

Senator Markey's bill improves pipeline safety via commonsense upgrades such as allowing new regulations to apply to existing pipelines. It will also streamline the rulemaking process and promote public participation and transparency by increasing the availability of critical safety information pipeline operators provide to the public.

For decades, the federal pipeline regulator, Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has been hamstrung by cost-benefit analysis requirements that subject all its rulemakings to two duplicative cost-benefit analyses, which can make the passing of new regulations nearly impossible in certain critical safety areas. Markey's new bill would eliminate the statutory cost-benefit requirement, unique to PHMSA, giving the regulator increased ability to protect public safety.

"This bill demonstrates Senator Markey's commitment to pipeline safety," PST Executive Director Bill Caram said. "For too long, Congress has kept PHMSA from being as strong a

regulator as necessary to protect communities from the risks of pipeline failures. This bill addresses those fundamental issues of authority."

In addition, the bill would deal directly with the issue of hydrogen and carbon dioxide pipelines and their lack of sufficient regulation at the federal level. Senator Markey calls for the development of strong safety regulations for CO_2 pipelines and that more information be gathered to determine the safety of blending hydrogen into the country's existing natural gas pipeline systems. The call for an independent study to be conducted before allowing operators to begin the controversial practice is important as hydrogen poses increased risks when in pipeline transit as it is more prone to explode than methane and its explosions are larger and burn hotter.

"PST enthusiastically supports Senator Markey's Pipeline Accountability, Safety, and Environmental Standards Act of 2024," Caram said. "We are deeply grateful to Senator Markey and his team for their work that will protect people and the environment from the risks of pipelines."

Read a one-pager about the bill's key provisions.

Read a section by section of the bill.

Read the full bill.

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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.