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Newsom Signs California Carbon Dioxide Pipeline Safety Bill into Law

Senate Bill 614 has provided Californians with some increased CO_2 pipeline safety protections. However, the bill needed to do more to ensure communities are safe from carbon dioxide pipeline hazards.

Bellingham, WASHINGTON - [Nov. 7, 2025] – While SB 614 includes provisions that will improve safety – such as the restrictions on the conversion of existing pipelines for carbon dioxide transport; the bill lacks other important construction and operation requirements, and more notably, protective routing and siting provisions.

"To ensure safety; communities need reasonable routing and siting provisions." Pipeline Safety Trust State Policy Advisor Amanda McKay said. "Safety regulations can make failures less frequent, but siting and routing provisions can ensure that when failures do happen, they are less likely to put communities in danger."

The federal pipeline regulator, Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), does not have the authority to set routing and siting provisions for pipelines. This authority is left to the state and local jurisdictions for liquid carbon dioxide pipelines and is one of the strongest tools to protect citizens from the dangers of a pipeline rupture. The public would benefit from restrictions on how close a pipeline can be built to where people live, work, and congregate.

In addition to adding strict routing and siting provisions, there are other areas that should be addressed to bolster the regulation of CO_2 in the state of California. Due to CO_2 being an asphyxiant that is heavier than air, and the fact it can travel large distances at lethal concentrations from the pipeline after a rupture – it is critical that the public be able to tell when a rupture has occurred. At this time, CO_2 pipelines are not required to be odorized; but in the event of a rupture, an odorant can be the public's initial sign that something is wrong. By

adding an odorant requirement for CO_2 pipelines operating inside the state of California, the public would have a greater ability to notice a potential catastrophe.

CO_2 pipelines are also susceptible to serious internal corrosion issues. Water, notoriously difficult to eliminate from CO_2 pipelines, allows the formation of carbonic acid in the pipeline which has a ferocious appetite for carbon steel. Setting strict contaminant limits for CO_2 pipelines would better protect the public from CO_2 pipeline incidents caused by internal corrosion. The public would also benefit from CO_2 pipelines being required to have more stringent valve spacing requirements.

“While we appreciate the author’s work on this important safety issue, the evidence is clear, this bill could have been stronger,” McKay said. “We hope California’s Office of the State Fire Marshal takes the opportunity to implement additional protections during the promulgation of these regulations.”

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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.