



December 11, 2014

Ms. Mahua Mazumdar
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Admin.
Office of Acquisition Services, PHA-30
1200 New Jersey Avenue , SE, E22-230
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Sam Hall
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Admin.
Office of Pipeline Safety, PHA-20
2180 Adventure Lane
Maidens, VA 23102

Dear Ms. Mazumdar and Mr. Hall,

On behalf of the BlueGreen Alliance Foundation, I'm pleased to submit a final report for the \$50,000 technical assistance grant awarded September 25, 2013 (agreement number DTPH56-13-G-PHPT-01).

The primary goal of this project was to educate labor and community partner organizations in the Twin Cities metropolitan area of Minnesota regarding the state of repair of the natural gas distribution system and to engage them in a collaborative effort to improve the identification and prevention of hazardous conditions.

During the grant period, we engaged in the following activities based on our expected program outputs (in italics) outlined in our application:

- 1. Research and production of a set of pipeline safety backgrounders (2) and fact sheets (2) tailored for labor and community/environmental audiences and focusing on hazard awareness, hazard identification and what workers and communities can do to help prevent natural gas distribution pipeline incidents – and to report/respond to incidents when they occur.*

A background presentation and fact sheet/brochure (Attachments 1 and 2) on the impacts of distribution pipeline incidents, and mechanisms to strengthen the integrity of the

distribution system was developed and distributed to national and Minnesota-based labor, environmental, community and industry stakeholders at a series of roundtable discussions initiating in October 2013, to include but not limited to presentations at the Inter Union Gas Conference, the American Iron and Steel Institute, Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference, and American Geophysical Union. Representing more than 2,000 participants, these venues featured participants directly representing Minnesota and Minneapolis-based employers in the utility and manufacturing sectors, workers, scientists, community organizations, and environmental activists.

A second set of background/ fact sheets (Attachments 3 and 4) outlining the state of the natural gas distribution system in Minnesota and opportunities for improvement were developed in July 2014 to educate Minnesota-based stakeholders and provide a reference point for engagement regarding pipeline safety and methane reduction strategies.

2. *Planning and hosting of two labor-community briefings featuring technical experts on pipeline safety and the regulatory infrastructure process, frontline gas pipeline workers, and community leaders.*

Outreach to Minneapolis-based frontline worker and activists roundtable was conducted throughout the grant period, culminating in three distinct convenings:

- a) A stakeholder kickoff briefing conducted in Minneapolis in April 2014 outlining local natural gas distribution system conditions and incidents, and discussion of a draft response strategy. Outreach and roundtable participation featured representatives and technical experts from the following groups:
 - Minnesota Pipe Trades Association
 - Sheet Metal Workers International Union Local 10
 - Gas Workers Local 340
 - Sierra Club – NorthStar Chapter
 - Minnesota Conservation Federation
- b) A mid-term stakeholder meeting featuring the above participants and adding United Steelworkers – Minnesota District 11, was convened in Minneapolis in July 2014 to address outstanding data and policy items stemming from the kickoff and identify areas of opportunity and development. This meeting introduced two additional focal points: 1) to include informing workforce development issues faced by Minnesota gas utilities as a means to ensure safety and emissions reduction; and 2) the crafting of best practices developed in Minnesota where Twin City gas utilities are ahead of the curve in terms of testing, repair, and replacement.
- c) A final stakeholder meeting was conducted at the Minnesota AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention, held in St. Paul, MN in September 2014 featuring the above participants, and open to all participants of the Convention. The goal of this meeting

was to present findings and materials regarding the focus areas of repair/ replacement, workforce development and utility best practices, and facilitate continued engagement on natural gas pipeline issues among the participating groups.

3. *Production of a final project report describing the effort and including a shared set of community-labor-business recommendations to be considered by, and form the basis of, dialogue with key decision makers.*

A final report (Attachment 5) synthesizing research, assessment of conditions and recommended actions was completed in September 2014, comprising the following elements:

- a) Overview of the state of Minnesota and Twin Cities leak-prone natural gas distribution pipes and areas for improvement;
- b) Best practices regarding leak detection, repair and replacement undertaken by Twin Cities utilities (Xcel Energy and Centerpoint) potentially serving as a model for other markets; and
- c) Workforce development challenges and opportunities for training and retention for gas utility workers.

This report was developed primarily via primary and secondary research undertaken by the BlueGreen Alliance project team, incorporating consultation and feedback from allied organizations along with review and feedback from the MN Office of Pipeline Safety, Xcel Energy, and Centerpoint.

Regarding elements b) and c), the final report is currently being used to educate participants in a current 2014-2015 PHMSA technical assistance grant project BGAF is implementing in the state of Indiana, and is designed to inform education, stakeholder engagement, and policy development in current and future BGAF natural gas distribution pipeline initiatives nationwide.

4. *Development and execution of a dissemination strategy for educational work products, including fact sheets, backgrounders, and the report, utilizing the communication platforms of BGAF partners.*

See number 5 below.

5. *Design and implementation of a media outreach strategy, depending on the outcomes and views of partners, including the use of the communications platforms of BGAF partners (newsletters, web sites) as well as social media.*

Materials, education efforts and stakeholder engagement developed for this project were disseminated and convened in the following ways:

a) In-person meetings

- Three formal stakeholder meetings held in April, July and September 2014 convening six Minnesota-based labor unions and environmental groups, representing pipeline workers, community advocates, and environmental activists.
- Presentation of MN project activities, challenges, opportunities and best practices at the meetings of the American Iron and Steel Institute, national Good Jobs, Green Jobs conference, American Geophysical Union summer conference (respectively in January, February, and June 2014 in Washington DC) as well as at the Inter Union Gas Conference (Niagara Falls, ON in October 2013). Representing more than 2,000 participants, these venues featured participants directly representing Minnesota and Minneapolis-based employers in the utility and manufacturing sectors, workers, scientists, community organizations, and environmental activists.

b) Individual outreach

- Project team staff undertook individual meetings and communication of campaign objectives and best practices assessment to allied regional stakeholders and gas utilities to include the MN Department of Public Safety, MN Office of Pipeline Safety, Xcel Energy, and Centerpoint.
- The final report from this project is currently being used to educate participants in a current 2014-2015 PHMSA technical assistance grant project BGA is implementing in the state of Indiana, and is intended to serve as a resource for current and future state- and utility-directed BGA natural gas distribution pipeline initiatives.

c) Electronic media

- Project goals and outcomes were distributed via BGA blogging and social media updates, in addition to incorporation of MN natural gas distribution repair and replacement opportunities in the Repair Minnesota report on state infrastructure issues (December 2013):
<http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/publications/document/Repair-Minnesota-full-report.pdf>
- Distribution of the project final report to over 5,200 Minnesota BGA members and supporters via email. The final report and fact sheet is also maintained on the MN BlueGreen Alliance website at:
<http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/news/latest/minnesota-natural-gas-distribution-pipeline-project>.

Also, attached with this submittal is Form SF425 – Federal Financial Report.

If you have questions regarding our work, please don't hesitate to contact me at (202) 706-6908 or robm@bluegreenalliance.org.

Thank you again for enabling the BlueGreen Alliance Foundation to educate our partners and the public about the natural gas distribution pipeline system in the Twin Cities area. We look forward to building out the relationships among the diverse array of groups concerned about gas issues convened through this project, and using the materials and lessons gained through this work to reduce methane emissions and improve system integrity and safety in Minnesota and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob McCulloch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob McCulloch
Director, Infrastructure Programs