



News Release

25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW | Washington, DC 20001 | 202.393.6226 | fax 202.393.2630 | www.naco.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2010

CONTACT: Jim Philipps

202-942-4220, jphilipps@naco.org

NACo applauds pipeline safety report

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties' (NACo) applauded the findings of a report issued Dec. 16 by the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA).

The report, *Partnering to Further Enhance Pipeline Safety in Communities through Risk-Informed Land Use Planning*, offers nearly 50 recommended practices for local communities, developers and pipeline operators to use to help reduce the safety risks that result from growth of communities near pipelines.

The recommendations offer options on how land-use planning and development decisions can help protect existing pipeline infrastructure and growing communities. The report also provides recommendations on how communities can gather information about local transmission pipelines and how local planners, developers and pipeline operators should communicate during all phases of new development to understand pipeline risks, and how to minimize pipeline excavation damages during site preparation and construction.

Several years ago, NACo signed an agreement with U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to help build county officials' awareness and capacity to improve transmission pipeline, especially through local land use practices, and pipeline safety.

Because an important NACo service is the technical assistance arm which provides information, training and assistance to counties, NACo helped the report's researchers identify elected county officials, key county professional staff including planners, to participate in the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) committee process.

"The National Association of Counties applauds the efforts of PHMSA bringing together representatives from the pipeline industry, communities, nonprofits and other key stakeholder groups to engage them in the PIPA process," said NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake. "NACo was pleased to have been given the opportunity to contribute to the report to ensure that the local government perspective was considered."

NACo supports PIPA for several reasons, including:

-more-

NACo page 2

- County government's responsibility to protect the health, welfare and safety of their citizens and the important role they play in working with key partners ensuring continued safe pipeline operations;
- County government's support of responsible energy development efforts which building effective partnerships among all levels of government, citizens, and the private sector;
- County government's desire to be involved as a significant partner and provide input during the formative stages in the development of standards, policies and guidance since local governments are often the primary service-providers; and
- Comprehensive land use planning and growth management are critical to social, economic and environmental stability.

NACo recognizes that pipeline accidents, while rare, do happen. As automobiles have seat belts and roads have guardrails, so should similar safeguards be considered for siting around pipelines. NACo believes industry and all levels of governments – federal, state, local – must work collaboratively to develop a range of best practices for pipeline safety. The PIPA project is a good example of this type of collaboration

The National Association of County Planners (NACP), an affiliate organization of NACo, said the report is a most welcome resource for planners nationwide.

“The recommendations will go a long way to assist planners and communities to implement safe and effective land use planning practices that could provide safety benefits to both communities and transmission pipeline efforts,” said NACP President Dennis Sandquist, director, Department of Planning and Development, McHenry County, Ill.

The PIPA Report is available in its entirety on the Land Use Planning page within PHMSA's Stakeholder Communications website at <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/LandUsePlanning.htm>. For more information about pipeline safety related issues, contact James Davenport, 202.661.8807 or jdavenport@naco.org.

###

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.