

News Release

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Important Report To Help Communities Plan More Safely Near Pipelines Released

Today the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) released a report from the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) that has been in the works for over two years. The report provides local governments and developers recommended practices to consider that will help make development near pipelines safer, and also provides a framework for how to consider the risk when new homes, schools, and businesses are proposed to be built near high-pressure transmission pipelines.

"After the San Bruno tragedy in California many communities began to question the wisdom of homes too near pipelines. This report from PIPA is a great start at helping communities better consider those risks, and then use their local planning, zoning and permitting authority to help reduce those risks." said Carl Weimer executive director of the Pipeline Safety Trust and a member of the PIPA Steering Committee.

The Pipeline Safety Trust has today launched an entire new section of our website devoted to better planning near pipelines. It can be found at: <http://www.pstrust.org/planningnearpipes.htm> The new website includes not only the PIPA report but also a good deal of additional information including recent news stories related to planning near pipelines, samples of ordinances that other communities have already adopted, and links to other similar efforts and reports.

"This initial PIPA report is just the start of this effort, and much more still needs to be done," Weimer went on to say. *"The next step needs to include a well funded implementation strategy to ensure that local governments become aware of these recommendations and how they can use their authorities to implement them. We also need to go back and address the risks associated with new pipelines being placed near existing development, since during this first round of this effort it was decided not to address that thorny issue. It should be noted that PIPA is a consensus-based group, which means the recommendations reflect what everyone in the process could agree to. One way or another this is a great first step to get local government to start thinking about these often ignored issues."*

This initial report from PIPA took over two years to develop and included representatives from city and county governments, pipeline companies, the public, developers, fire marshals, and state and federal regulators.

The Pipeline Safety Trust promotes 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. The Pipeline Safety Trust is the only national public interest organization to focus on pipeline safety issues. It came into being based on the efforts and recommendations of citizens after the 1999 pipeline tragedy in Bellingham, Washington. In 2003, the U.S. Justice Department made a condition of the Olympic Pipeline criminal settlement that \$4 million be designated for the start up of this independent non-profit organization to watchdog both the pipeline industry and its regulators.