

**Remarks of Howard “Skip” Elliott, Administrator  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
To the  
2020 Pipeline Research & Development Forum  
Arlington, Virginia  
February 19, 2020**

Good morning and welcome to our Research Forum!

PHMSA sponsors these forums so that we can build a robust research strategy which can capitalize and leverage your expertise in managing wide-ranging technical challenges to address public safety.

In pursuit of our mission and to support all of our stakeholders, it is critical that we accelerate the development of new knowledge and technology out to the market and end users.

As a safety agency, we must move as fast as technology, and as industry does too, so that we

never become a limiting factor on how quickly safety-enhancing technology can be put into widespread use.

Together and to date, we have produced many successes, both in research, and in the partnerships we have fostered in the pipeline technology community.

We believe these forums have been demonstrable successes, and we are all appreciative of the commitment everyone has made to participate.

That is why we recently expanded this collaboration by launching a web portal, where anyone with a research idea can submit information to us for

consideration. You will be soon hearing more about that initiative as we further promote it.

Research investment to remove key challenges remains a major component of the Administration's focus to both improve safety and to reduce regulatory and economic burdens.

We continue to grow the participation of universities in our program as innovation's leading edge toward safety challenges.

With those universities come students who are eager to contribute their growing expertise. And, I'm excited to see some of these student posters shown here later this morning.

Innovation also requires champions in industry to apply the lessons of academia appropriately, so that technology can transfer to the market. We anticipate this forum will facilitate that process, and I wish you the best in your participation over the next couple of days.

It is also important that we at PHMSA do more to drive faster innovations in safety technology. Words alone will never get us to where we need to be. So, it is incumbent upon us to be a catalyst for accelerated pace – from concept – to test – to implementation of technologies that will keep delivering tangible safety improvements until the day comes – and it will – that we eliminate all pipeline incidents that cause harm to people and the environment.

Now, I normally refrain from referencing quotes during speeches because to me it's a hollow means of making the speaker appear to be deeply intellectual. And, ladies and gentlemen, I can guarantee you that that is a place I will never arrive at.

Nonetheless, I recently was on leave with my daughter and her family at Disney World and saw Walt Disney's famous quote, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

At PHMSA, we dream of a place where all of us – government, industry, and academia – can gather and work to accelerate pipeline safety technology. But like Walt Disney inferred, you've got to do more than just dream it. You've got to do it. So, PHMSA is taking our vision and we are working to make it a

reality, and I'd like to show you some slides of what we hope will soon be our reality.