

The Honorable, Governor Gary Locke

Dear Governor Locke:

On behalf of the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety, I would like to urge you to sign into law Substitute Senate Bill 5182, Relating to funding hazardous liquid and gas pipeline safety. This bill ensures that our state will have adequate resources into the future to continue its work with the Federal Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) to make sure Washington's citizens can coexist safely with underground pipelines.

Hazardous liquid and natural gas pipelines are a critical part of Washington's energy infrastructure. As the energy crisis in Washington continues new energy facilities, including natural gas and hazardous liquids pipelines will be needed. These new facilities and the existing ones must be maintained and operated to the absolute highest levels of safety if we are to be sure that the tragedy that befell the citizens of Bellingham in June 1999 never happens again. Fully funding an ongoing pipeline safety inspection program at the Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) is essential for ensuring that all citizens can continue to live safely with our pipeline neighbors. The Commission has assembled a staff of pipeline safety inspectors that will conduct annual safety inspections of both interstate and intrastate pipeline companies operating in Washington. These inspectors will focus not only on safety inspections, but will also be available to provide valuable technical assistance to city and county governments working with pipeline operators on a variety of pipeline issues. This is an important and appropriate state resource that this legislation will bring to local governments.

For all the above reasons, the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety recommends your prompt signature on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Chuck Mosher,
Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety Chair