

Remarks by
Acting Administrator Brigham McCown
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
United States Department of Transportation

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Pipeline Inline Inspection Public Meeting
Westin Galleria Hotel
5060 West Alabama
Houston, Texas

As you may have heard, DOT underwent a reorganization last year where the former Research and Special Programs Administration was split off into two separate operating administrations. The first, the Research and Innovative Technology Administration will concentrate on innovative transportation technology and research. The second agency is of course Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), which is the marriage of the Offices of Pipeline Safety and Hazardous Materials Safety. This consolidation brings a vast majority of the Department's energy transportation into one single agency.

We have an exciting mission. Our mission, first and foremost, is safety. We also look forward to our consulting role with Homeland Security, other federal agencies regarding our crucial role in the energy sector. The Department recognizes the importance of this industry, and I think it's very important that we share the practical knowledge and experiences and know-how through forums such as this. We need new initiatives, we need to refine our current initiatives, and we need to keep some initiatives that are working well as we address the national needs.

Secretary Mineta recently spoke to the CEOs of the oil industry, about two weeks ago in Annapolis, and I wanted to share a couple of thoughts that he had. I pulled his speech

because when I'm talking about my boss I don't want to get it wrong. He's talking to pipeline company CEOs, when he said, "like arteries carrying precious blood to the heart, Pipelines transport precious natural resources that are the lifeblood of our country." He also said that today pipelines carry almost 66 percent of the energy products consumed in our country, and it is not surprising, therefore, that pipelines are by far the most important mode of transportation for energy products in the United States, and they are among the safest." He noted that on average there had been about two fatalities and less than nine injuries per year during the last decade, and even though one death was too many, this record is clearly impressive compared to other forms of transportation. He said, "for that I thank you, and please keep doing what you're doing." In concluding Secretary Mineta said that "we help the companies be safer today than they were yesterday, and safer tomorrow than they are today." Of course our ultimate goal is zero: no deaths, no injuries, no releases to the environment, no operating errors.

We at the Department of Transportation believe forums such as these are crucial to help us understand how to move forward and how to reach our goal. It's good for safety and good for the economy, and good for the country. In this age of questions regarding capacity, usage of energy products, an uninterrupted supply of energy is necessary if we're going to keep our economy growing and moving forward. The illustrate this point, just this morning one of the major news outlets was running a story highlighting pipeline capacity and noting that airports were trucking in supplies because they're unable to meet current demands. Stories such as this are possible telltale sign of how important it is not only to identify risks and issues, to fix the issues while keeping the pipelines safe.

I thank you for your time, and I look forward to sitting down and listening to the discussions today. Thank you.