



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

July 2, 2021

Ms. Erica Jackson
Manager of Community Outreach and Support
FracTracker Alliance
112 Sherman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15209

Dear Ms. Jackson:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 10, 2021, in which you requested, on behalf of People Over Petro Coalition and over 2,000 individuals who signed a petition, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) hold a public town hall meeting to discuss Shell Pipeline Company LP's (Shell) Falcon Ethane Pipeline System. PHMSA Acting Administrator Tristan Brown asked that I respond to your correspondence on his behalf. Based on the petition participation and the recent town-hall style event that PHMSA representatives attended in May—it is apparent that there is a lot of passion and concern from community members regarding this pipeline system. We appreciate and share the importance of ensuring that safety is paramount for this or any pipeline system.

As you may know, PHMSA's mission is to protect people and the environment by advancing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to our daily lives. To this end, PHMSA administers a national regulatory safety program for the 2.8 million miles of interstate and intrastate pipelines in the United States. This program requires that pipeline operators design, construct, operate, and maintain its pipeline facilities in compliance with the Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations contained in Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 190-199. To ensure that operators comply with these regulations, PHMSA and its state partners conduct inspection of pipeline operators to ensure compliance with these regulations. In the instance of the Falcon Ethane Pipeline System, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, is primarily responsible for considering permit applications for this facility. As part of their permitting process, a number of public meetings on the pipeline system were conducted.

Historically PHMSA has hosted public meetings to solicit stakeholder input on proposed regulations—which provide a venue for technical experts to provide input on regulatory scoping

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or technical feasibility. PHMSA also has community liaisons that attend town hall style events to hear from the public and share information about the work of the agency. We appreciated the opportunity for a PHMSA representative to join the town hall in May, regarding the Falcon Pipeline.

Because the agency does not have jurisdiction over pipeline routes, permitting of pipeline installations, pipeline approvals, or retaliation for whistleblower complaints, PHMSA has not hosted town hall meetings on individual pipelines or pipeline systems. We do however join in such meetings when they are hosted by the agencies responsible for routes, siting, etc., such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), state/local land use authorities, state environmental agencies, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), or the pipeline operator for example—particularly when such meetings might fall into PHMSA's jurisdiction—and we would certainly be happy to join such an event in the future as well.

Thank you again for your attention to pipeline safety. You may contact Karen Lynch, Community Liaison Services Program Manager, to acquire information on the availability of our Community Liaisons to participate in public meetings going forward. Ms. Lynch can be reached by email at Karen.Lynch@dot.gov or by telephone at 202-366-6855.

Sincerely,

William A. Rush

William Rush
Director of Field Operations