

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

June 25, 2015

Mr. Greg Armstrong
Chairman and CEO
Plains Pipeline, LP
Suite 1600
333 Clay Street
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

In the wake of the May 19, 2015, failure of Plains Pipeline, LP's Line 901 pipeline and subsequent crude oil spill along the Gaviota Coast of California, we write for information about your company's maintenance and integrity operations relating to this pipeline.

Preliminary information identified in the June 3, 2015 Amendment No. 1 to the Corrective Action Order (CAO) originally issued on May 21, 2015, by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) indicates Plains Pipeline's own May 5, 2015, inspection found "extensive internal corrosion" along three areas of the 11 mile 24-inch diameter pipeline.¹ According to the June 3, 2015, CAO, Plains also reported to PHMSA that the results of the inspection, which reportedly were not available at the time of the failure, "revealed metal loss of approximately 45% of the original wall thickness in the area of the pipe that failed."² However, a third-party metallurgist in the field estimated that corrosion at the failure site had degraded the wall thickness to an estimated 1/16 of an inch, "greater than the 45% metal loss which was indicated by the recent [In-Line Inspection] survey."³ A previous 2012 inspection along areas of the Line 901 pipeline near the failure site also generated repairs relating to external corrosion. Moreover, PHMSA also reports that a segment of Line 903, a connecting 128-mile pipeline system, also was reported to have "metal loss" anomalies in previous inspections and so Plains must take corrective action relating to this system as well.⁴

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Amendment No. 1 to the Corrective Action Order issued to Plains Pipeline, LP. CPF No. 5-2015-5011H. June 3, 2015.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

We seek your assistance to understand the facts and circumstances relating to the May 19 failure of Line 901 and to review information necessary to understand the quality of integrity programs implemented by Plains Pipeline. Accordingly, and pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, we ask that you respond to the following by July 10, 2015:

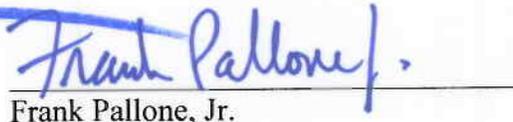
1. List and describe the design and construction of the Line 901 and 903 pipeline system, including the materials used and aspects of design, such as field coatings, depth of cover, temperature and pressure controls, and interval and location of shut-off valves, including automatic or remote-controlled shut-off valves.
2. Explain your maintenance and integrity operations relating to Line 901 and Line 903, including but not limited to a description of procedures, technologies, frequency, coverage, and results.
3. For all operations, maintenance, and integrity inspections for Line 901 and Line 903 for the previous five years, explain any corrosion or other anomalies identified and what you did to address and validate that any identified issues were resolved effectively.
 - a. Provide your maintenance and integrity plan for these pipeline systems covering the past five years, including any changes or proposed changes to the plan.
 - b. Provide all in-line or other inspection reports, including any third-party inspection reports in your possession or control, relating to these pipeline systems.
 - c. Provide your spill response plans for these pipeline systems and all related documents concerning response plans or the spill filed with PHMSA or the state of California.
4. Provide a detailed, inclusive timeline identifying all Line 901 related activity in the 48 hours leading up to and including the May 19, 2015, incident and what Plains did to report and respond to the incident.
5. Describe all incident-related actions subsequent to May 19, 2015, including additional integrity and state-of-condition reviews of the two pipeline systems.
6. Describe the technologies and tools used on these pipelines for operations, maintenance, inspection, and to mitigate the risk of spills.
7. Describe what you are doing to adopt new technologies that may be available to mitigate the risk of spills. What is your assessment of these technologies to date?
8. Provide and explain the most current estimate of the amount of oil spilled and proportion recovered.
9. Describe any plans to return Line 901 or Line 903 to service and any contingency plans to transport stranded crude during the interim period of time.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request. Instructions for responding to the committee's document requests are included as an attachment to this letter. Should you have any questions, please contact Peter Spencer of the majority committee staff at (202) 225-2927 or Ryan Gottschall of the minority committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

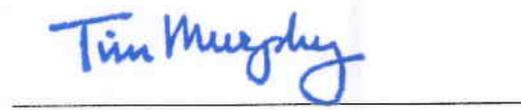
Sincerely,



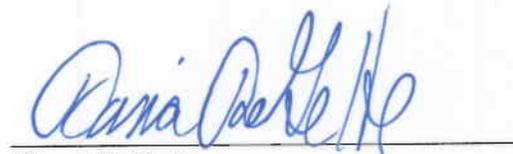
Fred Upton
Chairman



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



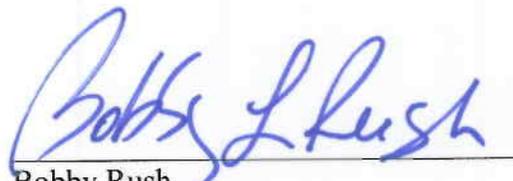
Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power



Bobby Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power



Joe Barton
Chairman Emeritus



Lois Capps
Member

Attachment