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## Bellingham City Council

March 7, 2023

The Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Representative Troy Nehls, Subcommittee Chair

Representative Donald Payne, Subcommittee Ranking Member

Representative Sam Graves, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair

Representative Rick Larsen, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member

Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C

RE: Reviewing implementation of the PIPES Act of 2020 and Examining Future Pipeline Safety Needs

Dear Subcommittee members,

I am Edwin H (Skip) Williams, a 30 year resident of city of Bellingham, Washington currently serving as a member of the Bellingham City Council. Thank you for allowing me to address your subcommittee hearing voicing my support for the overall need of pipeline safety and, more specifically, the elements addressed in the implementation of the PIPES Act of 2020 and your examination of future pipeline needs.

My family and I are victims of the Olympic Pipeline explosion that occurred in our city in 1999 where we lost one of our children. When the Olympic pipeline exploded there seemed to be very few regulations, industry practices, or oversight regarding pipeline safety. The elements that did exist did not seem to be enforced very consistently if at all. This event in our community highlighted the need for research, consistent industry safety standards regarding best practices, and oversight from all levels of government in order to enforce these safety standards.

I strongly believe that there needs to be open communications between pipeline operators, local communities, and federal and state governmental agencies in order to avoid pipeline accidents such as the Olympic Pipeline explosion.

As I read through the summary of the issues being considered by the committee for implementation of the PIPES Act of 2020 and the committee's examination of future safety needs, I see the following as priorities:

1. Providing greater resources at the state and local level to increase the number of pipeline inspectors
2. Eliminating the backlog of rulemaking through greater congressional oversight and additional resources,
3. Minimizing leaks and releases into our environment by requiring updated inspection and maintenance plans of pipeline operators.
4. The study of methods to improve pipeline integrity in order to address risks posed by ageing cast iron pipes and low pressure systems.

I feel strongly that these are all significant steps forward improving the oversight protections and maintaining the integrity of our pipeline system.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective on pipeline safety with the subcommittee. If you would like to discuss these concerns with me further, please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address below.

Sincerely,



**Edwin H. (Skip) Williams**  
Bellingham City Council  
[ehwilliams@cob.org](mailto:ehwilliams@cob.org)

Per Washington state law RCW 42.56, my written communications are public records and are subject to public disclosure requirements.