

Safety practices for transmission pipelines

McAfee & Taft RegLINC - January 2011

By [Robert Joyce](#)

In a report released by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) on December 16, 2010, the Agency unveiled consensus recommendations for property development near existing transmission pipelines. The report, entitled *Partnering to Further Enhance Pipeline Safety in Communities Through Risk-Informed Land Use Planning*, was prepared by the Pipeline and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) which is a coalition made up of more than 130 individuals from the pipeline industry, land development industry, government, and safety organizations. The Alliance is sponsored by the PHMSA Office of Pipeline Safety.



According to the document, PIPA's goal was to "reduce risks and improve the safety of affected communities and transmission pipelines through implementation of recommended practices related to risk-informed land use near transmission pipelines." The report represents the initial effort of PIPA to develop recommended practices for pipelines, land owners and developers, local governments and real estate boards to implement on a voluntary basis. The report, however, only addresses transmission pipelines and is not intended to apply to production, gathering and distribution pipeline systems. PIPA plans to continue working on an implementation strategy to enhance communication and understanding of the best practices outlined in the report.

The report identifies the key stakeholders potentially affected by transmission lines, outlines the benefits and risks associated with transmission pipelines, and considers that there is wide variation in the characteristics of these gas and hazardous liquid pipelines and their surroundings. Because of this variation, the report recommends a "risk-informed approach to land use planning and development" founded on good communication between the pipeline operators and the affected community and full consideration of the specific characteristics of the pipeline and its surroundings. The report presents a series of 18 Baseline (BL) Recommended Practices to be implemented by stakeholders in preparation for future land use and development, and 28 New Development (ND) Recommended Practices to be used when specific new land use/development projects are proposed.



One of the major recommendations is the use of consultation zones and planning areas to be adopted by local governments as part of ordinances requiring developers to contact pipeline operators and jointly review project plans for those zones and areas. The report provides a copy of a model ordinance, together with guidance on enhancing communications, developing planning areas, and incorporating transmission pipeline right-of-ways into new developments.

- [Full PHMSA's Stakeholder Communications report](#)

LINKS

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