

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street – Second Floor North
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Re: PUC Proposed Rulemaking- Docket No. L-2019-3010267

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to voice my strong opposition to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's proposed rulemaking on pipelines.

As a native of southeast Pennsylvania and former Chester County Commissioner, I share the concerns of many across the commonwealth about the recent increase to the price of energy. I believe that the rule currently before the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission is redundant, ineffective in improving pipeline safety, and will intensify the burden of high energy prices impacting Pennsylvanians. Moreover, the rule conflicts with existing federal PHMSA regulations that ensure the safe and secure movement of hazardous materials.

Now is not the time to restrict our domestic energy production, transportation and access. Inflation and gas prices have surged to record highs in the past months. The proposed regulations before the PUC will disrupt pipeline service and reduce consumers' access to fuel and natural gas at a time when prices are at historic highs. If implemented, the proposed rulemaking ensures utilities and shipping communities pay more. These are costs that will be passed on to consumers

The Public Utilities Commission website states that the commission, "works to ensure safe and reliable electric, natural gas, pipeline, motor carrier, rail, telecommunications, water and wastewater service at reasonable rates." In order to satisfy the depth of cover requirements, pipelines would need to be excavated and roads would be shut down. These disruptions would undermine the PUC's stated goal.

Compared to rail and truck transportation, pipelines provide a safe and dependable means to transport hazardous liquids. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is already responsible for overseeing and enforcing the safe and reliable operation of pipelines.

When Act 127 passed in 2011, the Pennsylvania General Assembly recognized that PHMSA regulations ensured safe pipeline operations. While Act 127 allows the commission to regulate non-utility intrastate hazardous liquid pipelines, it also expressly prohibits the commission from adopting regulations that "shall not be inconsistent with or greater or more stringent than the minimum standards and regulations adopted under the Federal pipeline safety law." Clearly, these regulations go above the federal standards set by PHMSA, and would make Pennsylvania's protocols the strictest in the nation.

These rigorous guidelines go beyond the necessary requirements, and will disproportionately impact hard working Pennsylvanians, particularly those in the low and middle class, during a time of economic

difficulty. I strongly urge the Public Utility Commission to reassess the proposed rulemaking in Docket No. L-2019-3010267.

Sincerely,

Earl M. Baker

Former Chester County Commissioner,
Former State Senator Serving the 19th District
Former Chair of the State Senate Labor and Industry Committee