

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 4, 2011

The Honorable Rand Paul
United States Senator
208 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Paul:

We are writing to request that you release your hold on the *Pipeline Transportation Safety Improvement Act*. One of our highest duties as United States Senators is to provide for the safety of the American people. This bill establishes necessary safety regulations where industry has failed to act in order to prevent future loss of life.

Your statement that “absolutely nothing in the current bill would have prevented the recent pipeline problems” is simply not true. On the contrary, this bill directly addresses the factors that contributed to eight deaths in an explosion in San Bruno, California.

The National Transportation Safety Board determined there were two probable causes of the explosion:

Problem: Inadequate quality assurance and quality control led to the installation of a substandard and poorly welded pipe section.

Legislative action: The pipeline safety bill addresses this by requiring pipeline operators to verify their records to confirm physical and operational characteristics of pipelines, including established maximum allowable operating pressure.

Problem: An inadequate pipeline safety management program failed to detect and repair or remove the defective pipe section.

Legislation action: The pipeline safety bill addresses this by requiring that the Department of Transportation evaluate how existing pipeline risk assessment

and accident prevention systems can be improved— and create new standards as appropriate.

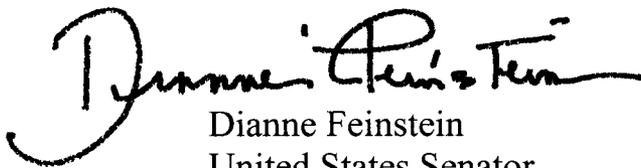
In addition to addressing those systemic problems, the bill you are blocking requires other commonsense safeguards, most notably the use of automatic or remote-controlled shut-off valves on new sections of pipeline that would minimize damage if a rupture occurs.

The United States has 2.5 million miles of oil, natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines. California is not the only state to suffer from pipeline ruptures and explosions; recently Clark County in your state of Kentucky suffered a pipeline rupture. Fortunately no one was injured, but we continue to endanger life and property by failing to ensure our pipelines are safe.

This legislation was unanimously passed out of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and includes many safeguards drawn from a bill we introduced earlier this year.

We believe that implementing these safety upgrades and precautions could prevent more communities from suffering the fate of San Bruno, and therefore we ask that you reconsider your hold. We would be happy to meet with you in order to further discuss the importance of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator