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Sent: 10/18/2011 3:30:04 PM
To: pac@cpuc.ca.gov (pac@cpuc.ca.gov); Frank Lindh (frl@cpuc.ca.gov)
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Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: FW: Rep. Speier Letter to Secretary LaHood on Aldyl-A
FYI

The Honorable Ray LaHood

Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I respectfully request that you direct PHMSA to take immediate action to address the long-known safety risks associated with pre-1973 Aldyl-A plastic pipe manufactured by DuPont. Specifically, I believe natural gas operators should remove this pipe from use in this country.

As you well know this pipe, used in natural gas distribution lines through the nation, has been prone to cracking caused by freezing temperatures and earth movement. Most recently there have been two natural gas explosions in Northern California that involved pre-1973 Aldyl-A pipe. The operator, PG&E, has announced that it will seek approval from the CPUC to replace all 1,231 miles of pre-1973 Aldyl-A pipe from its system. I commend PG&E on this step and am hopeful that it will propel the appropriate response from PHMSA and natural gas operators.

DuPont first issued warnings about the failure aspects of this pipe in 1982 and the NTSB recommended close monitoring and replacement of the pipe when necessary in 1998, following an Aldyl-A pipe explosion that killed six people in Waterloo, Iowa. Finally, in 2007 PHMSA recommend closer monitoring of the pipe, but fell short of putting operators on a removal schedule. The time to get pre-1973 Aldyl-A pipe out of the ground is now.

You, Mr. Secretary, appreciate better than anyone else how unlikely it will be to get Congressional action on this issue anytime soon. Although the NTSB recommendation has been on the books for more than 10 years, Congress has sat on its hands. You can do what 535 members of Congress can't or won't do. You can propose regulations to begin a systematic removal of this flawed and dangerous plastic pipe immediately. I hope you will.

All the best,

Jackie Speier

Member of Congress