

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMISSION



April 27, 2023

Supervisor Candace Andersen, Chair and Supervisor Diane Burgis, Vice-chair
Transportation, Water and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Supervisor Andersen and Supervisor Burgis:

Contra Costa County has approximately 800 miles of liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines running along its shoreline and throughout its interior. Though infrequent, these pipelines can leak or be damaged, which can lead to explosions, fires or other catastrophic events causing significant damage and loss of life. Two major examples in Contra Costa County are the 2004 explosion on the Kinder Morgan pipeline in Walnut Creek that killed 5 workers and the 2020 Kinder Morgan pipeline leak that spilled 63,000 gallons of gasoline into the Walnut Creek canal. Providing the public with information about pipeline safety issues and how they can protect themselves in case of a pipeline leak or dangerous event is very important.

With a grant from the Federal Department of Transportation, the Alamo Improvement Association (AIA) has developed a model Pipeline Information Center website that can serve the function of providing the public with information about important pipeline safety issues. They were assisted by a non-profit organization, the Pipeline Safety Trust, and used Civic Plus, who also designed several County Department websites, as the designer. The Hazardous Materials Commission provided feedback on the web site design to AIA in 2022 and reviewed the final model web site at our March 23, 2023 meeting. The Commission received a formal request from AIA at our April 27, 2023 meeting to support their request to the County that it adopt and maintain the Pipeline Information Center website. At our April 27th meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to encourage the Transportation, Water and Infrastructure Committee (TWIC) to support AIA's request that the County adopt and maintain the Pipeline Information Center website being presented at the May 8, 2023 TWIC meeting.

The Hazardous Materials Commission has a long history of supporting the Alamo Improvement Association in their efforts to educate the public about pipeline safety issues. We supported their applications for two previous grants to the Federal Department of Transportation in 2014 and 2017 that each resulted in reports recommending actions the County could take to improve pipeline safety. The Commission reviewed the recommendations in both reports and made a number of policy and legislative platform recommendations of their own to the Board of Supervisors based on those recommendations. Those grants also funded public education workshops and first responder training. The Commission also encouraged the Board of

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Supervisors to write a letter of support (which the Board subsequently did) for the grant that the AIA received to fund the development of the Pipeline Information Center website.

Even though the Commission is encouraging the County to adopt the Pipeline Information Center website, we acknowledge that the funding and staffing requirements to maintain this website are still uncertain at this time. Also, we acknowledge that the Board of Supervisors still has to determine which County Department is best suited to host the site and if there are adequate resources to sustain it over time. On the plus side, the Commission heard from the Pipeline Safety Trust at our April 27, 2023 meeting that they are very invested in the success of the project and are willing to provide on-going support on a contract basis for minimal cost. We also heard from one of our student interns, who's research focused on providing pipeline safety information to students and their parents, that the Pipeline Information Center website could be a valuable resource for students and their parents if the appropriate communications methods are developed.

The Commission hopes the Transportation, Water and Infrastructure committee will take the Commission's support of this proposal into consideration when it receives the Alamo Improvement Association's request for the County to adopt their Pipeline Information Center website.

Sincerely,



Fred Glueck
Hazardous Materials Commission Chairperson

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