

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5782 as amended. This is a good bill that reflects considerable work between the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Pipeline safety is not one of the most high-profile issues that the Congress deals with but it is one of the most important. Because oil and gas pipelines are largely out of the public's sight, they are usually out of mind as well, that is until we have a failure such as, those several years ago in the State of Washington and New Mexico, which left several people dead. The shut-in of Prudhoe Bay in Alaska last August served as a stark reminder of that dire consequences of non-lethal pipeline accidents.

After the Prudhoe Bay incident I announced that pipeline safety reauthorization needed to include three important elements: First, the law needed to be changed to cover low-stress pipelines such as those that failed in Alaska; second, enforcement needed to be strengthened; and third, we needed more transparency in DOT's enforcement processes. I am pleased to report that this bill accomplishes those objectives but also does much more.

The bill addresses excavation damage—one of the leading causes of pipeline incidents—through several measures. It requires States with pipeline safety programs certified by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a damage prevention program. The bill establishes grants to States to carry out such programs, and includes new penalty provisions for those who fail to abide by a State's call-before-you-dig program.

The bill also requires DOT to prescribe minimum integrity management standards for gas distribution operators, including a new requirement that excess flow valves be installed on new service lines. These new provisions will help strengthen that portion of the gas pipeline system that is closest to most American homes.

The bill takes a substantial step in making DOT's pipeline safety enforcement process more transparent to the general public, which has been a longstanding concern of mine. DOT will now be required to publish a monthly summary of its enforcement actions on both liquid and gas pipelines, giving the public valuable insight into areas where problems exist, and giving pipeline operators a forum to demonstrate they have been corrected.

The bill before us includes language passed by the Committee on Energy and Commerce that requires the vast majority of low-stress liquid lines to be regulated in a manner similar to high-stress liquid lines. This language responds to the issues raised by the spill on Alaska's North Slope last spring.

This bill also includes new language to require that pipeline operators file management plans that set forth a maximum limit on the hours of service performed by control room employees. I congratulate my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota Mr. OBERSTAR, for his dedication to this issue.

Finally, the bill authorizes DOT to hire an additional 45 new safety inspectors to carry out the important responsibilities that we have assigned to the department in this bill.

I want to thank Chairmen YOUNG and BARTON and Ranking Member OBERSTAR for all of their efforts on this bill and I urge the House to pass H.R. 5782.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of our consensus substitute to H.R. 5782, The Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety Act of 2006. This legislation represents a broad, consensus-based process that exemplifies what can happen when different interests come together in order to produce a successful product.

I thank Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR for working with Mr. DINGELL and myself on reconciling our two bills and for the open and fair process between the two Committees of jurisdiction.

Reauthorizing the Pipeline Safety laws became more complicated after BP's inexcusable Prudhoe Bay oilfield shutdown in August. After rigorous enforcement and analysis, and after a thorough investigation by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, DOT was able to approve restart of some of these lines at the Prudhoe Bay oilfield.

This substitute to H.R. 5782 retains compromise language that was marked up in the Energy and Commerce Committee to address the low stress pipeline exemption, as well as several other provisions that were worked out in bipartisan fashion. For example, the bill strengthens state one-call requirements for excavation damage, provides new authority and grant money to the states to develop their own damage prevention programs modeled after the successful programs already in place, and puts some sunshine on enforcement actions.

The low stress language preserves exemptions for gathering lines, flow lines, and other integrated pipeline facilities, but removes the exemption from DOT Part 195 regulation that was used by the BP Prudhoe Bay transit pipelines. The low stress language should also preserve the inherent flexibility that is already built into DOT's integrity management program.

In addition, in crafting the administrative procedures implementing the safety order authority under sec. 2(f), DOT should provide a pipeline operator an opportunity to confer with DOT before exercising the operator's right to a hearing. Informal consultation has the potential to produce remedies acceptable to both operator and DOT that will resolve the vast majority of concerns without the need for a formal hearing. Any action taken by mutual agreement as a result of any such consultation should be reduced to writing and made both public and enforceable. This approach will save time and legal costs and bring about safety improvements sooner.

I urge our friends in the other body to take this bill up and pass it this week, as it reflects changes that were drafted in order to reach agreement with the Senate.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. I rise in full support of the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act of 2006.

This bill is the result of months of hard work. I want to commend Chairmen YOUNG and BARTON and Ranking Members OBERSTAR and DINGELL, as well as committee staff for the countless hours they put in to get this bill done.

It was over 7 years ago, on June 10, 1999, that a pipeline explosion claimed the lives of two 10-year-old boys and an 18-year-old young man in my district in Bellingham, Washington. Since that time we have made excellent progress in ensuring the safety of our Nation's pipelines.

The 2002 Pipeline Safety Improvement Act did a lot of good things. It increased penalty

finances, improved pipeline testing timelines, and allowed for state oversight.

This bill is another step forward.

As a body, we can all be proud that we'll now be regulating low-stress liquid pipelines just as we regulate all other hazardous liquid pipes. What happened with BP lines in Alaska this summer shouldn't have happened and this bill will ensure operators are properly maintaining their low-stress lines.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this bill.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5782, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5782.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

#### PERMISSION TO INCLUDE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON H.R. 5782, PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD an exchange of letters between myself and Chairman BOEHLERT on H.R. 5782.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,

Washington, DC, December 5, 2006.

Hon. DON YOUNG,  
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 2165 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing regarding the jurisdictional interest of the Science Committee in H.R. 5782, the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement, and Safety Act of 2006, as proposed for consideration under suspension of the Rules of the House. The Science Committee has jurisdiction over Section 26 of the suspension version of the bill, which amends Section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (49 U.S.C. 60101 note; Public Law 107-355) and Section 18, which provides funding to carry out Section 12 of the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002.

The Science Committee recognizes the importance of H.R. 5782 and the need for the legislation to move expeditiously. Therefore, I will not stand in the way of floor consideration. This, of course, is conditional on our