



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –
PHMSA’s Progress Addressing Significant Safety
Issues

Date: May 5, 2015

Office of Surface Transportation Audits
Project No. 15S3007S000

From: Mitchell Behm 
Assistant Inspector General
for Surface Transportation Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-30

To: Acting Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administrator

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. As part of its mission, the Agency responds to congressional mandates and recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (OIG), regarding the safe transport of these materials. The Agency also addresses safety issues raised by other operating administrations in the Department of Transportation.

In a February 2015 letter to the Inspector General, the Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee highlighted the length of time PHMSA has taken to establish new regulations for railroad tank cars carrying crude oil and to implement mandates from the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011.¹ Because of these and other concerns, the Ranking Member requested that OIG conduct an audit of PHMSA’s pipeline and hazardous materials safety programs. Our objectives are to assess PHMSA’s (1) progress in addressing congressional mandates and recommendations from NTSB, GAO, and OIG issued since 2005; (2) process for implementing mandates and recommendations, including any impediments to Agency action; and (3) efforts to coordinate and address operating administrations’ safety concerns.

¹ Public Law 112-90

We plan to begin this audit in May and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, PHMSA and other operating administrations' Headquarters. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-5630, or Toayoa Aldridge, Program Director, at 202-366-2081.

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cc: PHMSA Audit Liaison, PH-3
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100
FMCSA Audit Liaison, MCPRS
FRA Audit Liaison, RPD-13
DOT Audit Liaison, M-1