



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –
PHMSA’s Technical Assistance Grant Program
Project No. 16S3009S000

Date: September 21, 2016

From: Barry J. DeWeese
Assistant Inspector General
for Surface Transportation Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-30

To: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administrator

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s (PHMSA) Pipeline Safety Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program provides funds to improve the safety of communities located near pipeline facilities. Between 2010 and 2015, PHMSA awarded about \$6.7 million in TAG funding to nearly 107 recipients for activities such as promoting safe digging around pipelines and purchasing software to help respond to releases of hazardous liquids from pipelines. While grant recipients may use funds for engineering and other scientific analysis of pipeline issues and to promote public participation in official pipeline proceedings,¹ they may not use funds for lobbying, direct advocacy for or against a pipeline construction project, or direct support of litigation.²

In June 2016, Congress passed the Protecting Our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2016,³ which mandates that we evaluate the TAG program, including the process used to award grants and oversee recipients’ use of funds. Accordingly, our audit objective is to evaluate PHMSA’s award and oversight of TAG funds.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will coordinate with your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at PHMSA’s

¹ 49 USC 60130(a)(4)

² 49 USC 60130(b)

³ Public Law 114-183.

Headquarters office and with grant recipients as appropriate. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-5630 or Wendy Harris, Program Director, at 202-366-2794.

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cc: PHMSA Audit Liaison, PH-4
OST Audit Liaison, M-1