



NEWS RELEASE
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Commissioners Receive Update on Dakota Access Pipeline from Federal Pipeline Regulators

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission met with Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) officials yesterday and received an update on federal safety inspections being conducted on the Dakota Access Pipeline. PHMSA is the federal agency responsible for regulating the safety of hazardous liquids transmission pipelines, including transmission lines that carry crude oil. The PSC’s role was to site the pipeline and PHMSA is the federal agency with regulatory authority over the construction, operation and maintenance of the pipeline.

“The discussion with PHMSA reinforced the value of new, state-of-the-art pipelines as the preferred method for transporting oil,” said Commission Chairman Julie Fedorchak. “It’s safer for the public and for the environment.”

During the meeting, PHMSA regional representatives ensured the Commissioners that federal inspectors have been active throughout the construction process of Dakota Access, including spending more than 400 inspection days on the project in all of the impacted states. Those federal inspectors are present at different times during construction to ensure the pipeline is being built to federal safety standards. Inspectors focus on a variety of procedures, construction practices and milestones of construction, including:

- Reviewing overall company processes to ensure proper training, equipment, inspection and best practices are being followed to produce a sound and safe pipeline. This includes reviewing the processes and work of all contractors and inspectors the company uses.
- Reviewing specifications, procedures and training for all the contractors, specialized trades and inspectors including welders and welding inspectors.
- Inspecting the protective coating applied to the pipeline.
- Observing the pipeline being lowered into the trench to ensure workers are using proper protocols to protect the coating and minimize stress on the pipe and welds.
- Observing during directional drills under waterways and while the pipeline is being pulled through the bore hole.

“The work of these neutral, third-party PHMSA inspectors provides great comfort for concerned citizens that this important oil transmission pipeline is being installed to meet or exceed all reasonable safety standards,” said Commissioner Randy Christmann.

PHMSA noted that construction on most pieces of the pipeline in North Dakota is nearing completion and plans are to complete construction and testing by the end of October. The only exception is the segment of pipeline currently being halted by a temporary court injunction and the Missouri River crossing south of Bismarck, which needs Corps of Engineers approval.

The PSC organizes semi-annual meetings with PHMSA regional representatives to discuss pipeline updates, emerging issues, and to maintain a relationship between the two agencies through open communications.

“It’s important that the PSC and PHMSA continue to work together as the future of the Dakota Access Pipeline unfolds,” said Commissioner Brian Kalk. “Both agencies share many of the same concerns such as worker safety and proper construction of the pipeline.”

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, grain elevators, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

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