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## News

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### **PHMSA Issues Interim Final Rule Revising the Pipeline Safety Regulations to Address Safety Issues Related to Underground Natural Gas Storage Facilities**

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued an interim final rule (IFR) that revises the Federal pipeline safety regulations to address safety issues related to downhole facilities, including well integrity, wellbore tubing, and casing. This first step in addressing critical safety issues is responsive of Section 12 of the PIPES Act requiring PHMSA to enact minimum federal safety standards for underground natural gas storage facilities and addresses the concerns of the public highlighted by the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak incident of 2015. The Aliso Canyon incident resulted in the estimated release of 4.62 billion cubic feet of natural gas, or the greenhouse gas emission equivalent of 500,000 passenger cars driven for 1 year.

“Less than one year after the formation of the DOT/ DOE Interagency Task Force on Natural Gas Storage Safety, we have developed an interim final rule that puts critical safety standards in place for underground storage facilities across the country and establishes a consistent, minimum federal baseline for states to develop their own regulations,” said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. The Interagency Task Force report can be found [here](#).

The IFR incorporates the American Petroleum Institute’s recommended practices 1170 and 1171 by reference into the pipeline safety regulations ([49 C.F.R. Part 192](#)). Recommended practices 1170 and 1171 outline standards for the design and operation of solution-mined salt caverns used for natural gas storage, and functional integrity of natural gas storage in depleted hydrocarbon reservoirs and aquifer reservoirs. The incorporation of these RPs will provide PHMSA and the states with a minimum federal standard for inspection, enforcement, and training through a federal/state partnership and certification process modeled after the current pipeline safety program. The standards will directly apply to approximately 200 interstate facilities, and serve as the minimum federal standard for approximately 200 intrastate facilities.

“This IFR addresses aging infrastructure and is the first step in a multiphase process to enhance the safety of underground natural gas storage,” said PHMSA Administrator Marie Therese Dominguez. “These minimum federal standards will help to prevent incidents like the one at Aliso Canyon from happening in other communities around the country.”

This IFR is effective 30 days after the date of publication in the federal register. Comments must be received 60 days after publishing to the federal register. Comments may be submitted to docket number PHMSA-2016-0016 beginning on the date of publishing in the federal register.

You may view the full text of the IFR here [\[insert link to PHMSA page\]](#).

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*The mission of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration is to protect people and the environment by advancing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to our daily lives. PHMSA develops and enforces regulations for the safe 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. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> or [https://twitter.com/PHMSA\\_DOT](https://twitter.com/PHMSA_DOT) for more information.*