



Contact: Stan Wise
Phone 404-657-4574
www.psc.state.ga.us

GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

244 Washington St S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: 404-656-4501
Toll free: 1-800-282-5813
(outside metro Atlanta)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12-16

FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER STAN WISE NEWS RELEASE

COMMISSIONER STAN WISE GIVES CREDIT TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSIONER'S EFFORTS TO PASS 2016 PIPELINE SAFETY ACT

ATLANTA, June 28, 2016 – Commissioner Stan Wise is acknowledging the efforts of fellow regulatory commissioners and staff of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in securing the reauthorization of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Act through 2019, which includes a mandate to craft new rules for underground natural gas storage in the wake of a massive gas leak in Southern California last fall. President Obama signed the measure into law last week.

“I want to especially congratulate NARUC First Vice President, Commissioner Robert Powelson of Pennsylvania for his leadership, as well as Commissioner Diane X. Berman of New York, Commissioner Paul Roberti of Rhode Island and Commissioner Norman Saari of Michigan, for leading the effort to reauthorize this important legislation,” said Commissioner Wise. “I also want to praise the hard work of our NARUC Legislative Director for Energy Christopher Mele on Capitol Hill in making sure Congress understood the importance of this legislation,” added Wise. Commissioner Wise also testified on behalf of NARUC before the House Energy Committee in support of this legislation.

Commissioner Wise also wants to recognize other Commissioner colleagues involved in this effort: John Betkoski, Connecticut; Ronald Brise, Florida; David Ziegner, Indiana; Nick Wagner, Iowa; Daniel Logsdon, Kentucky; Norman Saari, Michigan; Beverly Heydinger, Minnesota; Travis Kavulla, Montana; Tim Schram, Nebraska; Richard Mroz, New Jersey; Diane Burman, New York; ToNola Brown-Bland and Edward Finley, North Carolina; Asim Haque, Ohio; John Coleman, Pennsylvania; Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota; Judith Jagdmann, Virginia; and Philip Jones, Washington.

PHMSA's most recent authorization had expired in 2015. The Protecting Our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act of 2016, or PIPES Act, is a four-year reauthorization of the U.S. Department of Transportation agency and strengthens pipeline safety, clarifies safety oversight efforts, and provides greater regulatory certainty in connection with transporting energy commodities.

On the heels of several accidents involving oil pipelines, gas leaks and derailments of trains carrying crude oil, lawmakers on Capitol Hill have mostly been on the same page and seamlessly advanced legislation addressing pipeline safety. The House approved the PIPES Act June 8, 2016 and the Senate gave it the green light June 13, 2016. President Obama signed the legislation into law on June 21, 2016.

The Georgia Public Service Commission administers Georgia's Pipeline Safety Program which is one of the larger state programs. Georgia's pipes service about 2 million residents on 43 million miles of distribution lines and 1.2 million miles of transmission lines. These lines are inspected by 11 Commission inspectors with a total annual budget of \$1.8 million.

The state receives PHMSA's Base Grant, the State Damage Prevention Grant and the One-Call grant which allow the Commission to effectively operate the Georgia program by providing the needed resources for staffing, equipment and supplies. Georgia's Pipeline Safety Program enjoys an excellent working relationship with PHMSA's Southern Region, including recent collaborations on a much needed firefighter-emergency response training program and providing technical assistance on an Operator Inspection/Investigation.

Georgia's Pipeline Safety Program has replaced more than 2,300 miles of bare steel and cast iron pipe with a vintage plastic replacement program underway. In 2105, Georgia Pipeline Safety personnel inspected more than 73 percent of all units on more than 1,000 inspection person days greatly exceeding the 2014 requirement of 886. Inspectors completed inspections on 100 percent of municipal and private operators.

The PIPES Act carves out a number of mandates that had been included in the previous PHMSA reauthorization bill in 2011. According to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders, the 2011 reauthorization included 42 specific directives for PHMSA to carry out to improve pipeline safety, but PHMSA has completed only half of them so far.

The legislation ensures that the agency will finish the 2011 act requirements, lawmakers said.

Notably, the bill also requires PHMSA to undertake a rule-making for underground gas storage facilities. That has taken on greater urgency in light of the gas leak at Southern California Gas Co.'s Aliso Canyon storage facility in October. The incident displaced thousands of area residents, with the leak finally being sealed in February.

The PIPES Act also includes critical reforms and new tools to protect communities across the country from serious accidents involving the transportation of gas and hazardous liquids by pipeline.

For example, the measure establishes a working group made up of PHMSA and state officials, industry stakeholders, and safety groups to develop recommendations on how to create an information sharing system to improve safety outcomes. And the bill authorizes PHMSA to create a national integrated pipeline safety database to have a clearer picture of federal and state safety oversight efforts

Commissioner Wise has frequently represented state regulators in the nation's Capital, testifying multiples times before the U.S. Congress and serving as president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in 2003-2004.

Commissioner Wise is serving his fourth six-year term on the Georgia Public Service Commission. He was first elected in 1994 and re-elected in 2000, 2006 and 2012. He also chairs the NARUC Natural Gas Committee. His full bio is found at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/stan-wise/>
See photo at end of release.

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a five-member constitutional agency that exercises its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies. For more information, visit the Commission website at www.psc.state.ga.us .



Commissioner Stan Wise

###