



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Pipeline and Hazardous  
Materials Safety  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**DEC 31 2019**

Overnight Express Mail

Mr. Brad Johnson  
Chairman  
Montana Public Service Commission  
1701 Prospect Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Chairman Johnson:

On December 18, 2019, a representative of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) conducted an evaluation of Montana's enforcement of its excavation damage prevention law. PHMSA conducted this evaluation pursuant to 49 United States Code § 60114 and 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 198, Subpart D -- State Damage Prevention Enforcement Programs. Based on this evaluation, PHMSA has determined that the enforcement of Montana's excavation damage prevention law is "adequate."

As you may be aware, excavation damage continues to be a leading cause of pipeline failures, some of which have resulted in fatalities, serious injuries, and environmental damage. Nationwide statistics show that effective enforcement of state damage prevention laws reduces excavation damage and pipeline incidents, resulting in enhanced public safety.

In closing, PHMSA appreciates your dedication to safety and encourages the excavation damage prevention stakeholders in Montana to continue to support damage prevention outreach initiatives that promote 811 and safe digging practices. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Dr. Christie Murray, our Director of Outreach and Engagement, at (202) 366-4996 or by email at [Christie.Murray@dot.gov](mailto:Christie.Murray@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

Massoud Tahamtani  
Deputy Associate Administrator, Policy and Programs  
Office of Pipeline Safety

cc: Mr. Joe Tierney, Pipeline Safety Program Manager,  
Montana Public Service Commission