

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN  
LT. GOVERNOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 13, 2015**

**CONTACTS:**

Dave Parker, Communications Director, 444-9844

Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, 444-9725

**Governor Bullock Calls for Increased Inspections for Pipelines, Orders Administration to Review State's Authority to Reduce Risk to Montana Waterways**

Helena, Mont.—Citing the recent oil spill into the Yellowstone River near Glendive, Governor Steve Bullock today sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx requesting additional pipeline inspectors in Montana, as well as more frequent pipeline inspections. In addition, Bullock ordered members of his cabinet to review and determine the state's authority to oversee siting of pipelines to reduce the risk of future spills.

"Oil spills in Montana's rivers are unacceptable and will not be tolerated," Bullock said in his letter to Foxx. "As Governor, I am working to ensure that those responsible for these spills are held accountable, the environment is cleaned up to our standards, and that we do everything we can to avoid another oil spill into Montana waters."

In his letter, Bullock called on the U.S. Department of Transportation to take the following steps:

1. Instruct the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to immediately reevaluate its inspection schedule and appropriate depth of cover requirements. This evaluation should lead to more frequent inspections and deeper minimum cover depths for pipelines under Montana rivers. PHMSA should also determine whether trenching to bury a pipeline in riverbeds is ever appropriate;
2. Direct PHMSA to base additional pipeline inspectors in Montana with a priority of inspecting the 3,800 miles of pipelines in the state for which the agency is responsible;
3. Compile and report to his office a list of all oil pipelines PHMSA regulates in Montana. Included with this information he requested data on pipeline ownership, age, depth of cover, whether or not the pipeline has been horizontally directionally drilled, latest PHMSA and company inspection reports, along with future PHMSA and company inspection schedules for the next two years;

4. Provide professional technical assistance to Montana so that as the state considers granting easements it has the best science to impose protective conditions for pipeline river crossings; and,
5. Direct PHMSA to take the necessary steps to improve timely and comprehensive sharing of information with the state, specifically the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

PHMSA, which is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, is the primary agency responsible for overseeing pipeline safety and maintenance.

In a separate memo, citing two oil spills into the Yellowstone River in the past four years, Bullock instructed the Montana Departments of Natural Resources & Conservation, Environmental Quality and Fish, Wildlife & Parks to review and determine the state's authority to place conditions on the siting of both existing and future easements for pipelines that cross navigable waters in the state.

Bullock instructed these agencies to provide their findings to him by February 25, 2015.

Today's actions by Bullock follow-up on previous steps he has taken to respond to the oil spill, including:

- Issuing an executive order declaring a state of emergency in the impacted areas;
- Relocating a member of his staff to Glendive to ensure the concerns of residents are being addressed;
- Instructing bottled water to be brought into the communities when there were concerns about water safety;
- Dispatching a public water supply specialist to the area to identify and address impacts to the community's water supply; and
- Instructing his administration to monitor adverse impacts on wildlife in the impacted areas.

In addition, Bullock has made several trips to the impacted area to assess the damage and ensure Bridger Pipeline Company was taking all appropriate steps to address damage caused by the spill.

Bullock's letter to Secretary Foxx can be found [HERE](#).

Bullock's memo to members of his cabinet is available [HERE](#).

###