

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 2, 2026

The Honorable Paul J. Roberti
Administrator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Roberti,

We write with concern regarding a recent incident at the Oxford Compressor Station in Oxford, Connecticut. On July 12, 2026, two equipment failures at the station resulted in the largest release of natural gas in Connecticut in over a decade, startling and awakening local residents with loud, frightening noises.¹ We urge the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to conduct a fully transparent review of the station malfunction and to take meaningful steps to prevent a similar incident in the future.

Shortly after midnight on July 12, Oxford residents reported hearing sounds resembling a jet engine near their homes.² According to reports, the noise lasted for approximately 45 minutes.³ While it is now clear that the sound was caused by the rapid release of natural gas moving from high to low pressure, residents initially received no explanation. They were never formally notified that these noises were due to the malfunction at the compressor station.⁴

Moreover, residents were not told about the volume of natural gas released into their environment or whether specific health protocols were needed. According to incident data from PHMSA, the compressor station released more than 35 million cubic feet of natural gas in less than an hour—an amount equal to what 450 Connecticut homes use in an entire year, and among the top 10 percent of nationwide releases reported in the last decade.⁵

In addition to concerns about notification and transparency, we are troubled by the fact that the station experienced two separate equipment failures. Both equipment failures involved the station's emergency shutdown system, which is intended to respond to abnormalities and

¹ Aine Pennello, "Why were CT residents woken by jet engine-like sounds? Report shows equipment failures, large release of natural gas," *Connecticut Public Radio*, September 29, 2026, <https://www.ctpublic.org/news/2026-09-29/why-were-ct-residents-woken-by-jet-engine-like-sounds-report-shows-equipment-failures-large-release-of-natural-gas>

² Pennello, "Why were CT residents woken by jet engine-like sounds?"

³ Pennello.

⁴ Pennello.

⁵ Ibid.

leaks.⁶ According to reports, the first failure was due to a malfunction of the newly installed emergency pull switch and the second failure was a valve not closing completely.⁷ These two malfunctions compounded the issue at the station, leading to the release of gas and loud sounds. PHMSA is responsible for ensuring the safety of natural gas pipelines and related infrastructure, and these malfunctions warrant scrutiny.

Given the breakdowns at the station and their impact on the community, we urge PHMSA to thoroughly investigate the causes of these malfunctions and implement measures to prevent future incidents. We also urge PHMSA to provide full transparency in its review of this situation and keep local residents abreast of the findings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jim Himes
Member of Congress

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.