CHARTER

U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Voluntary Information-Sharing System Working Group

1. Committee's Official Designation: The committee will be known as the Voluntary Information-Sharing System Working Group (the Group).

2. Authority: The Group is established in accordance with the provisions of section 10 of the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-183), the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 (5 U.S.C., App. 2, as amended), and 41 C.F.R. § 102-3.50(a).

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities: The Group shall provide the Secretary of Transportation with independent advice and recommendations on the development of a voluntary information-sharing system to encourage collaborative efforts to improve inspection information feedback and information sharing with the purpose of improving gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline facility integrity risk analysis.

4. Description of Duties: The Group shall consider and provide recommendations to the Secretary as specifically outlined in section 10 of Public Law 114-183:
   a. The need for, and the identification of, a system to ensure that dig verification data are shared with in-line inspection operators to the extent consistent with the need to maintain proprietary and security-sensitive data in a confidential manner to improve pipeline safety and inspection technology;
   b. Ways to encourage the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis;
   c. Opportunities to share data, including dig verification data between operators of pipeline facilities and in-line inspector vendors to expand knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of in-line inspection technology and methodologies;
   d. Options to create a secure system that protects proprietary data while encouraging the exchange of pipeline inspection information and the development of advanced pipeline inspection technologies and enhanced risk analysis;
   e. Means and best practices for the protection of safety and security-sensitive information and proprietary information; and
   f. Regulatory, funding, and legal barriers to sharing the information described in paragraphs (a) through (d).

   The Secretary shall publish the Group's recommendations on the Department of Transportation's public Web site.

5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports: The Group reports to the Secretary of Transportation.

6. Support: The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) will provide support as the Group's sponsor.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years: The estimated annual operating cost is approximately $250,000 for travel, meeting space, and recording proceedings, plus one-half of a full-time equivalent in staff support. This amount also covers limited conference management support for meetings provided by a contractor.

8. Designated Federal Officer: The Group's Designated Federal Officer (DFO) must be a full-time or permanent part-time employee appointed in accordance with agency procedures. PHMSA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Pipeline Policy and Programs—or that individual's designee—will serve as the DFO. The DFO will approve or call all advisory committee and subcommittee meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the Secretary.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings: The Group will meet approximately four times per year.

10. Duration: Continuing; however, the Group's purpose will be fulfilled once its recommendations are published online.

11. Termination: This charter will terminate 2 years after its effective date unless:
    a. Renewed in accordance with FACA and other applicable requirements or
    b. The Group is terminated earlier because it has fulfilled the purpose for which it was established.

12. Membership and Designation: The Group will consist of no more than 30 members appointed by the Secretary for a term of 3 years, including representatives from:
    a. PHMSA;
    b. Industry stakeholders, including operators of pipeline facilities, inspection technology, coating, and cathodic protection vendors, and pipeline inspection organizations;
    c. Safety advocacy groups;
    d. Research institutions;
    e. State public utility commissions or State officials responsible for pipeline safety oversight;
    f. State pipeline safety inspectors;
    g. Labor representatives; and
    h. Other entities, as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

All members serve at the pleasure of the Secretary and may be reappointed for additional terms. To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary will ensure the membership is fairly balanced regarding points of view of the affected interests.

A member appointed for his or her individual views or advice must be appointed as a Special Government Employee (SGE). Other members will serve as Representatives or Regular Government Employees (RGEs).

13. Subcommittees: PHMSA has the authority to create subcommittees. Subcommittees must report back to the parent committee, and must not provide advice or work products directly to PHMSA or the Secretary.

14. Recordkeeping: Records of the committee and subcommittees will be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 or other approved agency records disposition schedule. These records will be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

15. Filing Date: The filing date of this charter is November 2, 2016.