The State of Washington

Proclamation

WHEREAS, June 10 marks the day in 1999 when a pipeline ruptured and exploded in Bellingham, Washington, releasing more than a quarter of a million gallons of gasoline into Whatcom Creek, igniting a fireball that tragically killed two children and one young adult, destroyed a salmon stream, and caused millions of dollars in damages; and

WHEREAS, since then, Washington State has made significant progress in improving pipeline safety; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the Washington State Legislature established the Washington Pipeline Safety Act and created the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, Congress passed the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act, increasing penalty fines, improving pipeline testing timelines, and providing whistleblower protection; it was reauthorized in 2006 as the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety (PIPES) Act; and

WHEREAS, since 2000, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission has conducted hundreds of pipeline inspections, and required the correction of more than 1,000 state and federal code violations; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 24,000 miles of gas and hazardous liquid pipelines in Washington State operated by 26 companies, quietly delivering the energy we need to heat our homes, drive our cars, cook our food and operate our businesses, and

WHEREAS, greater awareness of pipelines and their safe operation improves public safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the State of Washington, in memory of the tragedy that took the lives of Liam Wood, Stephen Tsiorvas, and Wade King, do hereby proclaim June 10, 2009, as

Pipeline Safety Day

in Washington State, and I call upon government agencies, industry leaders and consumer advocates to educate residents about sound pipeline practices. Further, I call upon pipeline operators, excavators and contractors to comply with state and federal laws addressing pipeline safety.

Signed this 8th day of June, 2009

Governor Christine O. Gregoire