Fidelity Pipeline: A Ticking Time Bomb?
Will faulty construction intersect with record tourism?

Pipeline under scrutiny for alleged safety concerns
Watchdog group says construction falls short of industry best practices; Builder says it is meeting or exceeding standards

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The pipeline that Fidelity is constructing through Moab's Arches National Park has drawn significant attention from environmentalists and safety activists. The Canyon Country Coalition for Pipeline Safety has raised concerns about the project's adherence to industry best practices. They argue that the pipeline is being constructed without proper consideration of environmental impacts.

Construction workers weld two pipe-ends together on the Dead Horse Lake trails near Moab. [Photo courtesy of Donnie Miller]

The pipeline, scheduled to be completed in 2015, will transport natural gas from the Uintah Basin to the Intermountain Power Project in central Utah. However, the Coalition is skeptical about the project's safety and environmental impact.

"The pipeline is being constructed in a manner that is inconsistent with industry standards," said Coalition spokesperson Sarah Johnson. "We are concerned about the potential for accidents and the environmental consequences of a pipeline leak."
Pipeline design & construction

The BLM clearly promised Grand County a safe pipeline in their Environmental Analysis (EA): Section 2.2.2: “While this gathering line will not be regulated, the pipeline would be designed and constructed to meet and exceed federal and industry standards that would be applied to a similar transmission pipeline.

Categorization as a transmission pipeline rather than a gathering line is important to protect the health and welfare of the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area.

Section 2.2.2 needs to be enforced & the line regulated as a transmission pipeline or else the BLM needs to offer a new amendment for the public to comment on construction of a non-regulated gathering line.
Pipeline design & construction (cont.)

- The Federal government establishes minimum pipeline safety standards under 49 CFR, Parts 190 through 199. The BLM is obligated to enforce its construction requirements.
  - Section 192.235 - Preparation for Welding
  - Section 192.307 - Inspection of Materials
  - Section 192.317 – Protection from Hazards
  - Section 192.455 – External Corrosion Control
  - Section 192.479 - Atmospheric Corrosion Control

- The General Provision of 49 CFR 192 states that [the] Administrator…that has submitted a current certification under the pipeline safety laws…with respect to the pipeline facility governed by an operator’s plans and procedures may, after notice and opportunity for hearing…require the operator to amend its plans and procedures as necessary to provide a reasonable level of safety.
Construction Stipulations (cont.)

Adherence to all aspects of the plans, procedures, design features, & mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Assessment

The Dead Horse Point Lateral ROW Amendment (UTU-67385) stipulates that the decision is contingent upon Fidelity adhering to all aspects of the Proposed Action which includes the final Plan of Development, Safety Procedures, Reclamation Plan, and environmental commitments (design features). The decision is also contingent upon Fidelity fulfilling the mitigation measures identified in the EA and Fidelity posting the required bond.
Concerns/problems

Examples of safety issues observed:

- In the field, there was no indication that the monitor was reviewing, documenting or otherwise carrying on oversight.
- Clamping removed before weld completed. Potential for pipe shifting that creates microscopic cracks in the joint.
- Excessive tension resulting from lack of supports over washes & other low spots.
- No evidence that dust mitigation for air pollution or equipment power washing for preventing the spread of noxious weeds & non-native plants is being implemented.
- No plans in place to coat the pipe to prevent rust & decay.
- Placement over rocks & through trees increases surface grinding & fire potential because of heat & friction.
- There are no warning signs or barriers preventing vehicles from using the ROW either north or south of the pipeline route off Mineral Point Road.
Concerns/problems (cont.)

 направленности

 Location safety issues:

 - A de facto transmission line located above ground exposes the pipeline to a number of potential threats: Jeep, ATV or dirt bike accident, gunshot, lightning strike, vandalism, people playing on it, etc.

 - Its proximity to the Cowboy Camp, Horsethief campground, & Dubinky Well Rd. means that an explosion resulting from a rupture threatens significant injuries & loss of life.

 BLM lack of responsiveness:

 - Specifications for the welding procedure have not been made public.

 - Why is the BLM not taking every possible step to ensure public safety & require the pipeline builder to adhere to the construction stipulations?
Field Violations Observed

- Scratched exterior & weld damage from dragging the pipe

  ✔ Threatens integrity of the wall & increases chance of rupture
Field Violations Observed (cont.)

- No trestles for support & it passes thru trees
  - Leads to scouring & dangerous flexing of the pipe;
    public may be tempted to swing on it
Field Violations Observed (cont.)

- Location against trees is a fire threat
- Fire may result from pipe’s heat transfer or friction created by pipe movement
Field Violations Observed (cont.)

生态圈 mitigation or power washing of equipment prior to use
☑ Both required by the Environmental Assessment
Field Violations Observed (cont.)

- Moving of machinery along & across open roads without using cautionary warning or stop signs
Field Violations Observed (cont.)

- Should Cowboy Camp, Horsethief Campground, & Dubinky Well Road be closed?
  - Without barricades, a strong probability exists of pipeline damage from children horsing around or vehicular impacts
BLM Responsibilities on Behalf of the Public

- Enforcement of EA section 2.2.2
  - Will the BLM be responsible for enforcing all federal codes necessary for building a high-quality, safe pipeline?

- Survey the pipeline for deviation from pipeline standards required in Section 2.2.2
  - Including but not limited to 49 CFR 190 through 199

- X-ray entire pipeline to test for weld quality

- Mandate an additional inspector & allow access to all inspector reports
  - No visual evidence that the sole monitor was reviewing, documenting or otherwise carrying on oversight
BLM Responsibilities on Behalf of the Public

- Allow access to the pipeline construction manual & safety plan
- MOU between BLM & Canyon Country Coalition for Pipeline Safety outlining the procedures that will be used to survey the safety of the line. A final report will detail the disposition of all problems found by the pipeline survey
- Designation of whom is liable if a rupture occurs
It’s Common Sense That an Aboveground Pipeline in a Multi-use Recreational Area Must Meet Transmission Line Standards

7,978 incidents
512 deaths
2,360 injuries

Isn’t it better to be safe than sorry?
Thank You for Taking the Time to Listen to Our Concerns

We look forward to carrying on this conversation with you in the future