

# Gas lines tied to fracking lack oversight, audit shows

## Links may not undergo safety inspections

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The federal government knows nothing about thousands of miles of pipelines that tap natural gas flows released through the drilling method known as hydraulic fracturing, and needs to step up oversight to ensure they are running safely, government auditors say.

Private companies have put in hundreds of gathering pipelines in recent years to collect gas and oil supplies freed through the high-pressure drilling technique.

Nationwide, about 240,000 miles of gathering pipelines ferry the fuels to processing facilities and larger pipelines in top energy-producing states. Many of these pipelines course through densely populated areas.

The Government Accountability Office said in its report issued Thursday that most of those miles are not regulated by the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which means they are not regularly inspected for leaks or corrosion.

### Locations uncertain

In some states, officials don't know where the lines are.

Emily Krafjack, who lives near the Marcellus Shale formation in Pennsylvania, said many local residents have no idea that the lines near their homes are not overseen by federal regulators. Lines in the northeastern corner of the state receive no federal oversight if there are fewer than 10 homes within 220 yards of the pipeline.

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"Who would ever think that they could run something like this next to your home and it wouldn't have any regulations attached to it?," said Krafjack, a former community liaison for Wyoming County, Pa., on gas issues.

Nationwide, there are about 200,000 miles of gas-gathering lines and up to 40,000 miles of hazardous liquid gathering lines in rural and urban areas alike, ranging in diameter from about 2 to 12 inches. But only about 24,000 of those miles are regulated, according to the report.

### Data not required

The industry is not required to report pipeline-related fatality, injury or property damage information about the unregulated lines. The PHMSA only collects information about accidents on the small subset of gathering lines that the agency regulates, but that data was not available Thursday.

The pipeline agency is considering collecting more data on unregulated lines, but the plans are preliminary and have met with resistance from the natural gas industry. Agency officials are reviewing more than 100 public comments received about their proposal for gas lines, and also plan to propose a rule that would cover hazardous liquid gathering pipelines by the fall, said Jeannie Layson, a spokeswoman for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.