

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2023

Chairwoman Jennifer L. Homendy
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington DC 20594

Dear Chairwoman Homendy,

On March 24th, the community of West Reading, Pennsylvania was rocked by a deadly explosion at the R.M. Palmer Company plant. We are immensely grateful to the many first responders who reacted quickly to save lives, as well as to the local, state, and federal officials who are now working diligently to determine the cause of this disaster.

Thankfully, representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have been very responsive to our staff. On March 31st, they conducted a briefing for congressional staff and informed us that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will be taking the lead on the investigation going forward. We understand that the investigation has only just begun and there is still a great deal we don't know about the exact circumstances of the explosion yet, but it is paramount that NTSB proceed expeditiously and diligently with this task.

We have every confidence that the NTSB will conduct the most thorough and wide-ranging investigation possible. This is especially critical to prevent any future similar or related incidents. If this explosion is determined to have been triggered by a natural gas leak or other public utility failure, we are certain you agree that particular gas line or utility must be included in the investigation to ensure that no other buildings are at risk of a similar accident.

Furthermore, we are requesting that your team, and the other federal agencies you are coordinating with, keep our offices apprised of all relevant details as the investigation progresses. We also ask that as more information is uncovered, you publicly share as much information as you are able. We believe that having a better understanding of what happened is an important part of the recovery and healing process for everyone who has been affected by this event and will help to prevent future accidents.

Thank you for your diligent work in protecting our community, and in providing the facts that are so desperately needed.

Sincerely,



Rep. Chrissy Houlahan



Rep. Madeleine Dean



Sen. John Fetterman



Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr.