

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of the Chairwoman

Washington, DC 20594



March 26, 2026

Mr. Mitch Behm
Deputy Inspector General
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Behm:

This letter provides information about the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) March 12, 2026, report, *Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosions and Fires, Jackson, Mississippi, January 24, 2024, and January 27, 2024*, NTSB/PIR-26-01. The details of this accident investigation and the resulting safety recommendations may be found in the attached report, which can also be accessed at <http://www.nts.gov>.

As a result of this investigation, we identified the following safety issues:

- Compression coupling leaks that the natural gas distribution operator had identified and left unrepaired.
- Insufficient leak management program, which did not determine appropriate monitoring timelines for leaks in adverse-soil conditions.
- Ineffective public awareness program, which did not adequately educate the public or emergency response officials on how to respond to a suspected natural gas leak.
- Inadequate distribution integrity management program, which did not appropriately assess and address risk in its pipeline system.
- Absence of natural gas detection alarms in buildings, which left occupants vulnerable to the dangers of unrecognized gas leaks.

Accordingly, the NTSB makes the following safety recommendation to the Department of Transportation Office of the Inspector General (additional information regarding this recommendation can be found in the noted section of the report):

- Audit the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's ongoing joint assessment of Atmos Energy Corporation (with the eight state partners that regulate Atmos Energy Corporation's facilities), including a review of Atmos Energy Corporation's approach to the safety management of its pipeline and how it applies lessons learned across all its operating divisions. (P-26-1) (See section 2.3.)

The NTSB is vitally interested in this recommendation because it is designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate a response within 90 days of the date of this letter, detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement this recommendation. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendation by number (Safety Recommendation P-26-1). We encourage you to submit your response to ExecutiveSecretariat@ntsb.gov. If your reply, including attachments, exceeds 20 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions on how to send larger documents. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

Sincerely,

[Original Signed]

Jennifer L. Homendy
Chairwoman
On behalf of the entire Board

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of the Chairwoman

Washington, DC 20594



March 26, 2026

The Honorable Paul J. Roberti
Administrator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Roberti:

This letter provides information about the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) March 12, 2026, report, *Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosions and Fires, Jackson, Mississippi, January 24, 2024, and January 27, 2024*, NTSB/PIR-26-01. The details of this accident investigation and the resulting safety recommendations may be found in the attached report, which can also be accessed at <http://www.nts.gov>.

As a result of this investigation, we identified the following safety issues:

- Compression coupling leaks that the natural gas distribution operator had identified and left unrepaired.
- Insufficient leak management program, which did not determine appropriate monitoring timelines for leaks in adverse-soil conditions.
- Ineffective public awareness program, which did not adequately educate the public or emergency response officials on how to respond to a suspected natural gas leak.
- Inadequate distribution integrity management program, which did not appropriately assess and address risk in its pipeline system.
- Absence of natural gas detection alarms in buildings, which left occupants vulnerable to the dangers of unrecognized gas leaks.

Accordingly, the NTSB makes the following safety recommendation to the

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (additional information regarding this recommendation can be found in the noted section of the report):

- Issue an advisory bulletin urging operators to adopt probabilistic risk models for distribution integrity management where appropriate. (P-26-2) (See section 2.5.)

In addition, the NTSB reiterates the following recommendations to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration:

- Evaluate industry's implementation of the gas distribution pipeline integrity management requirements and develop updated guidance for improving their effectiveness. The evaluation should specifically consider factors that may increase the likelihood of failure such as age, increase the overall risk (including factors that simultaneously increase the likelihood and consequence of failure), and limit the effectiveness of leak management programs. (P-21-2) (See section 2.5.)
- Identify effective means for natural gas distribution pipeline operators to communicate with people who live, work, or congregate within the coverage area of a natural gas distribution pipeline system and implement a plan to help operators drive continuous improvement in public awareness of natural gas safety. (P-25-3) (See section 2.4.)

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate a response within 90 days of the date of this letter, detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement these recommendations. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number (Safety Recommendation P-26-2, Safety Recommendation P-21-2, and Safety Recommendation P-25-3). We encourage you to submit your response to ExecutiveSecretariat@ntsb.gov. If your reply, including attachments, exceeds 20 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions on how to send larger documents. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

Sincerely,

[Original Signed]

Jennifer L. Homendy
Chairwoman
On behalf of the entire Board

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of the Chairwoman

Washington, DC 20594



March 26, 2026

Mr. Kevin Akers
President and Chief Executive Officer
Atmos Energy Corporation
5430 Lyndon Baines Johnson Freeway, Suite 1800
Dallas, TX 75240

Dear Mr. Akers:

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. We determine the probable cause of the accidents and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, we carry out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinate the resources of the federal government and other organizations to assist victims and their family members affected by major transportation disasters.

We are providing the following information to urge Atmos Energy Corporation to act on the safety recommendation in this letter because we believe your organization can help reduce the risk of future accidents. For more information about the NTSB and our recommendation process, please see the attached one-page summary.

This letter also includes information about our March 12, 2026, report, *Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Home Explosions and Fires, Jackson, Mississippi, January 24, 2024, and January 27, 2024*, NTSB/PIR-26-01. The details of this accident investigation and the resulting safety recommendations may be found in the attached report, which can also be accessed at <http://www.nts.gov>.

As a result of this investigation, we identified the following safety issues:

- Compression coupling leaks that the natural gas distribution operator had identified and left unrepaired.
- Insufficient leak management program, which did not determine appropriate monitoring timelines for leaks in adverse-soil conditions.

- Ineffective public awareness program, which did not adequately educate the public or emergency response officials on how to respond to a suspected natural gas leak.
- Inadequate distribution integrity management program, which did not appropriately assess and address risk in its pipeline system.
- Absence of natural gas detection alarms in buildings, which left occupants vulnerable to the dangers of unrecognized gas leaks.

Accordingly, the NTSB makes the following safety recommendations to Atmos Energy Corporation (additional information regarding this recommendation can be found in the noted section of the report):

- Develop and implement a program to locate and replace all mechanical couplings and mechanical joints located in expansive soils that are not resistant to pipe pullout with couplings and joints developed specifically for those conditions. The program should establish and make public the project milestones and timeline. (P-26-3) (See section 2.2.)
- Update your companywide leak management program procedures to require weekly monitoring of nonhazardous (grade 2 or grade 3) belowground leaks identified in locations with adverse-soil conditions (such as water-saturated soil, flooding, drought, frozen ground, or settlement). (P-26-4) (See section 2.3.)
- After completing the action described in P-26-4, implement a training program to maintain employee and contractor proficiency on the updated procedures. (P-26-5) (See section 2.3.)
- Develop and implement a program to provide more frequent training to emergency response officials in all the distribution areas that you serve, including training on how to respond to natural gas-leak calls, and monitor the program for effectiveness. (P-26-6) (See section 2.4.)
- Require your technicians who identify but do not repair a belowground natural gas leak to immediately notify people near the unrepaired leak that (1) the hazard potential of a leak can change over time, and (2) they should evacuate and then call 9-1-1 and Atmos Energy Corporation every time they smell natural gas odorant. (P-26-7) (See section 2.4.)

- Develop and implement a program to proactively identify and collect missing service-line information for all your operating divisions. The program should (1) identify one or more methods for gaining additional system data and (2) establish and make public the milestones and timeline for acquiring the unknown system data. (P-26-8) (See section 2.5.)
- Transition from a relative-risk model to a probabilistic distribution integrity management risk model. (P-26-9) (See section 2.5.)
- Develop and implement a program that makes natural gas alarms available to members of the public who reside in your distribution areas. (P-26-10) (See section 2.6.)

The NTSB is vitally interested in these recommendations because they are designed to prevent accidents and save lives. We would appreciate a response within 90 days of the date of this letter, detailing the actions you have taken or intend to take to implement these recommendations. When replying, please refer to the safety recommendations by number (Safety Recommendation P-26-3 through -10). We encourage you to submit your response to ExecutiveSecretariat@ntsb.gov. If your reply, including attachments, exceeds 20 megabytes, please e-mail us at the same address for instructions on how to send larger documents. Please do not submit both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the same response.

All communications regarding safety recommendations are stored by the NTSB and viewable by the public. Please do not send privileged or confidential communications in response to this recommendation. Responses marked as confidential or privileged (or similar designations) will be considered nonresponsive. In the likely event that your organization uses auto-generated and/or preformatted confidentiality statements on letterhead or outgoing e-mails, please include a statement in your letter indicating that the information can be publicly released. If you have concerns about this protocol, please contact us at ExecutiveSecretariat@ntsb.gov.

Sincerely,

[Original Signed]

Jennifer L. Homendy
Chairwoman
On behalf of the entire Board