

Decision No. C26-0065

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 25R-0280GPS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES REGULATING PIPELINE OPERATORS AND GAS PIPELINE SAFETY, 4 CODE OF COLORADO REGULATIONS 723-11.

**COMMISSION DECISION ADDRESSING EXCEPTIONS
TO DECISION NO. R25-0735 AND ADOPTING RULES**

Issued Date: January 29, 2026

Adopted Date: December 23, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. BY THE COMMISSION2

 A. Statement2

 B. Background.....2

 C. Motions for Oral Argument and Related Filings.....5

 D. Exceptions, Findings, and Conclusions.....6

 1. Rule 11001(a) – Advanced Leak Detection Technology Definition.....6

 2. Rule 11001(b) – Business District Definition8

 3. Rule 11102 – Verbal Reporting of Pipeline Incidents and Events.....9

 4. Rule 11103(b)(II) – Submission of Annual Report.....10

 5. Rule 11209 – Advanced Leak Detection Survey Requirements11

 a. Rule 11209(a) – Leak Survey Requirements for Transmission and Gathering Pipelines12

 b. Rule 11209(b) – Leak Survey Requirements for Distribution Pipelines13

 6. Rule 11210 – Leak Classification and Repair Requirements.....14

 a. Rule 11210(a)(I)(A) – Grade 1 Leak Classification15

 b. Rule 11210(a)(I)(B) – Grade 2 Leak Classification.....15

 c. Rule 11210(a)(I)(C) – Grade 3 Leak Classification.....16

 d. Rule 11210(b)(II) – Grade 2 Leak Repair Requirements.....16

e. Rule 11210(b)(III) – Grade 3 Leak Repair Requirements17

7. Exceptions Requesting Regulation of Type R Pipelines.....18

II. ORDER.....19

A. The Commission Orders That:19

B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS’ WEEKLY MEETING December 23, 2025.....21

I. BY THE COMMISSION

A. Statement

1. Through this Decision, the Commission addresses the exceptions filed to Decision No. R25-0735, issued October 15, 2025, by the Administrative Law Judge assigned to this proceeding. The Commission adopts rules requiring pipeline operators to use Advanced Leak Detection Technology (“ALDT”) in periodic leak surveys and establishing timelines for the repair of identified leaks. The adopted rules are attached to this Decision in legislative format (*i.e.*, strikethrough/underline) and Attachment A, and in final format as Attachment B.¹

B. Background

2. On June 30, 2025, through Decision No. C25-0489, the Commission issued the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NOPR”) that commenced this Proceeding to amend the Rules Regulating Pipeline Operators and Gas Pipeline Safety, 4 *Code of Colorado Regulations* 723-11 (“Pipeline Safety Rules”), proposing changes to Rules 11001, 11008, 11009, 11012, 11100, 11101, 11102, 11103, 11201, and 11203, and proposing new Rules 11209 and 11210. The NOPR explained that § 40-2-115(1)(d)(II)(e), C.R.S., and House Bill 25-1280 require the Commission to “adopt rules related to pipeline safety and repair and the use of advanced leak

¹ For clarity, we note that Attachment A shows changes to the existing Pipeline Safety Rules, which include the rules adopted through Decision No. C25-0784 in Proceeding No. 25R-0455GPS.

detection technology” on or before November 1, 2025, to “meet the need for pipeline safety and protection of the environment.”²

3. The Commission referred the matter to an Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) for a recommended decision.

4. Initial written comments on the proposed rule changes were requested to be filed by July 22, 2025, and any comments responding to the initial comments were requested to be filed by July 29, 2025.

5. The following entities filed initial comments: Adams County; QB Energy Operating LLC; City of Aurora, Energy and Environment Division; Colorado Energy and Management Commission ; Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Red Cedar Gathering Company; TEP Rocky Mountain LLC; Larimer County; Carbon Mapper, Inc.; American Petroleum Institute Colorado (“API Colorado”); Colorado Natural Gas, Inc. (“CNG”); Pinedale Natural Gas, Inc.; City and County of Broomfield; Atmos Energy Corporation (“Atmos Energy”); Colorado Springs Utilities; Colorado Oil & Gas Association (“COGA”); Environmental Defense Fund (“EDF”); Public Service Company of Colorado (“Public Service” or the “Company”); GreenLatinos; Citizens for a Healthy Community; Pipeline Safety Trust (“PST”); Black Hills Colorado Gas, Inc., doing business as Black Hills Energy (“Black Hills”); Colorado State University; and Bridger Photonics, Inc.

6. The following entities filed response comments: CNG, API Colorado, Larimer County, Colorado Springs Utilities, COGA, Public Service, Moms Clean Air Force, EDF, Atmos Energy, Western Colorado Alliance, GreenLatinos, Adams County, CHC, and DCP Operating Company.

² Decision No. C25-0489, ¶¶ 16, 18.

7. On August 5, 2025, a rulemaking hearing on the proposed rules and related matters was held in which oral public comments were received. At the hearing, the ALJ also gave an additional deadline for written comments to be filed by August 15, 2025. Adams County, Atmos Energy, Larimer County, EDF, and Public Service filed additional comments.

8. On October 15, 2025, through Decision No. R25-0735 (“Recommended Decision”), the ALJ adopted rules.

9. On October 31, 2025, the Commission adopted temporary rules related to pipeline safety and repair and the use of advanced leak detection technology through Decision No. C25-0784 in Proceeding No. 25R-0455GPS. The Commission found adoption of temporary rules was imperatively necessary to comply with state law and explained that adoption of temporary rules does not preclude rulemaking participants from taking exception to the Recommended Decision in this Proceeding.

10. On November 4, 2025, the following entities filed timely exceptions to the Recommended Decision: API Colorado; Atmos Energy; PST; Black Hills; Colorado Springs Utilities; Public Service; EDF, 350 Colorado, Earthworks, Citizens for a Healthy Community, Western Colorado Alliance, and GreenLatinos (collectively, “Joint Environmental Commenters”); CNG; COGA; and Larimer County, Adams County, Boulder County, City and County of Broomfield, City of Longmont, and Colorado Communities for Climate Action (collectively, “Local Governments”).

11. CNG, COGA, Local Governments, Joint Environmental Commenters, and Public Service filed responses to exceptions on November 18, 2025. In addition to or as part of their responses to exceptions, the Joint Environmental Commenters and the Local Governments also included Motions for Oral Argument.

12. CNG, Public Service, Black Hills, and Atmos Energy filed a Joint Response to the Local Governments' and Joint Environmental Commenters' motions for oral argument on December 2, 2025.

13. Larimer County filed a Motion for Leave to Reply to the Joint Response on December 9, 2025.

C. Motions for Oral Argument and Related Filings

14. The Local Governments request oral argument on the exceptions, pursuant to § 24-4-105(14), C.R.S., and the Joint Environmental Commenters request oral argument pursuant to Commission Rule 1505(c) on the Adopted Rules and Recommended Decision. Both motions state that the timeline for this rulemaking was short because the legislation only allowed four months to pass complicated rules, and that oral argument would clarify the parties' positions and assist the Commission's decision.

15. In their Joint Response opposing the motions for oral argument, CNG, Public Service, Black Hills, and Atmos Energy state the request is procedurally improper under Rule 1505(c) and that oral arguments would be an improper re-hearing of matters that have already been heard and decided.

16. In its motion for leave to reply in support of the Local Governments' motion and reply, Larimer County states the requested oral argument would be on the adopted rules, not the proposed rules, and that these matters were not properly adjudicated by the ALJ.

17. In this circumstance, we find that our rulemaking processes allow participants the opportunity to robustly advocate for their positions in written filings, and we do not agree that oral argument would further assist the Commission's decision making. Therefore, we deny the motions for oral argument. We also deny Larimer County's motion for leave to reply for lack of good cause.

Despite the asserted material misrepresentation of fact and alleged incorrect statement of law, the Commission understands the exceptions process and that exceptions were filed to the rules adopted by the ALJ.

D. Exceptions, Findings, and Conclusions

18. In rendering this Decision, the Commission has considered all arguments presented in the several exceptions-related filings,

1. Rule 11001(a) – Advanced Leak Detection Technology Definition

19. As originally proposed in the NOPR, Advanced Leak Detection Technology (“ALDT”) was defined as “commercially available equipment that can detect leaks in gas pipelines at the detection threshold of a 10 kg/hr emission rate with 90 percent or greater probability of detection, or better, to use with other part 192-regulated gas pipeline facilities or within a suite of mutually-reinforcing technologies to offer comparable leak detection ability.” This definition was the result of an unpublished final ALDT rule from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (“PHSMA”), stakeholder discussions, and industry committee input.

20. Based on party comments, the Recommended Decision amended the proposed definition to tailor the detection threshold to the type of pipeline system being monitored, finding that a general concentration or rate detection threshold may not encompass the broad range of available and potential leak detection technologies. This resulted in different sensitivity thresholds required for ALDT used on transmission or gathering lines, as compared to distribution lines.

21. On exceptions, participants including PST, Local Governments, and Joint Environmental Commenters propose that sensitivity thresholds should be technology based, rather than solely dependent on pipeline type. PST argues that the thresholds are not sensitive enough to promote safety and environmental protection. It argues that for distribution lines, thresholds for

leakage surveys using mobile, aerial, or satellite-based platforms should be 0.2 kg/hr with a 90 percent probability of detection, and for leakage surveys performed with handheld leak detection equipment, it should be 5 ppm within 5 feet. For transmission and gathering lines, it encourages a leak detection technology performance standard of 3kg/hr. The Local Governments and Joint Environmental Commenters also support these sensitivity thresholds, arguing the adopted thresholds are 25 times less stringent than those proposed by PHMSA, and are too high to be effective.

22. On exceptions, Black Hills argues that using “kg/hr” rather than “ppm” moves away from industry standards focused on pipeline safety rather than evaluation of emissions. Public Service supports the definition of ALDT in the adopted rules, but this support is contingent on the allowance in Adopted Rule 11209 that ALDT is not required for all leak detection surveys.

23. Responding to these exceptions, CNG supports the adopted thresholds and argues that unduly tight thresholds may have the unintended consequence of causing LDCs to have fewer technology options that may force them to forego more affordable technologies and be compelled to use ones that are prohibitively expensive. The Colorado Oil and Gas Association also supports the adopted thresholds as feasible and more flexible than the proposed definition. Public Service responds that the more sensitive detection thresholds would be unnecessarily prescriptive and would exclude other effective, commercially available technologies, thereby stifling innovation, and imposing a costly burden on operators.

24. We agree with the concept of technology-based sensitivity thresholds, proposed on exceptions by PST, the Local Governments, and the Joint Environmental Commenters. Sensitivity thresholds are more important for considering technology type application rather than limiting a particular technology to a pipeline type. ALDT should be used in its most appropriate

application, which is not dependent on a pipeline type (such as transmission vs. distribution), but on the appropriate environmental or operational application. The original thresholds proposed in the NOPR of 10 kg/hr and 5 ppm, based on sensitivities included in PHMSA’s unreleased final rule and supported in part on exceptions, strike an appropriate balance between cost considerations and moving forward with more sensitive leak surveys. We also correct a typo in the definition, changing “conformed” to ”confirmed.” We therefore amend the ALDT definition to read as follows:

(a) “Advanced leak detection technology” means commercially available equipment that, for screening surveys, can detect potential or confirmed leaks in a pipeline to use with other Part 192 regulated gas pipeline facilities or within a suite of mutually reinforcing technologies to offer comparable leak detection ability. This can include a variety of commercially available methods to detect leaks including, but not limited to, optical, infrared, or laser-based devices, continuous monitoring via stationary gas detectors, pressure monitoring or other means; mobile surveys; or systemic use of any other commercially available advanced technology, based on the following:

- (I) technology using infrared or laser-based leak detection equipment; mobile, aerial, or satellite-based platforms; or fixed continuous monitoring systems must have a minimum flowrate detection threshold of 10 kg/hr with a 90 percent or greater probability of detection;
- (II) technology using handheld leak detection equipment or equipment mounted on ground vehicles must have a minimum sensitivity of 5 ppm.

2. Rule 11001(b) – Business District Definition

25. The NOPR proposed a definition for “business district” to ensure sufficient leak surveys and timely repairs for leaks in proximity to areas where people congregate at greater densities. “Business district” is only used in the rules to differentiate between distribution pipeline leak survey intervals. The ALJ maintained this concept but changed the definition to align with the definition from the Gas Piping Technology Committee (GPTC) guidelines.

26. In its exceptions, PST contends the definition is slightly ambiguous in relation to residential areas where people are most often present, and it advocates that the Commission include “multi-family residential” in the list of regularly utilized spaces included in the definition.³ In response to these exceptions, Public Service states that the term has long-standing meaning in federal regulations, and that PHMSA has repeatedly declined to expand the term’s meaning to include residential areas to prevent confusion. Public Service supports the adopted rules as clear and practical to implement.

27. We grant PST’s exceptions, in part, and further modify the definition to better capture the intended areas. We modify the definition to reflect a focus on wall-to-wall paving, where gas will follow the path of least resistance, possibly to building foundations via existing underground facility pathways, instead of venting to the atmosphere. We agree with PST that it is appropriate to include multi-family residential areas in a list of non-exhaustive list of examples. We amend the definition of “business district” to read as follows:

- (I) areas where gas facilities are located, with or without other underground facilities, under continuous street and sidewalk paving that extends to the building walls on one or both sides of the street (this may include areas where the public regularly congregates or where the majority of the buildings on either side of the street are regularly utilized for industrial, commercial, financial, educational, religious, health, multi-family residential, or recreational purposes); or
- (II) any other area that, in the judgement of the operator, should be so designated.

3. Rule 11102 – Verbal Reporting of Pipeline Incidents and Events

28. Under existing rules, operators must call the PSP Staff to verbally pipeline issues that are federally-defined “pipeline incidents” or Colorado-defined “pipeline events.” The defined

³ PST Exceptions, p. 2.

incidents and events cover leaks, ruptures, explosions, etc. that present more serious public safety risks, such as events that result in evacuations or widespread outages. The adopted rules add subsection (G) to Rule 11102(b)(III) – that “any leak as defined in Section 11210” is a Colorado-defined pipeline event that must be telephonically reported to PSP Staff. Adopted Rule 11210 classifies all types of leaks, even minor ones.

29. Public Service, API Colorado, Atmos, Black Hills Gas, and Colorado Springs Utilities filed exceptions to remove this change. They state that it would impose an extreme burden on utilities and PSP Staff to comply and handle the influx of reporting, and that significant leaks are already covered by virtue of other reportable criteria in the existing rule. API’s proposal varies slightly, suggesting that only Grade 1 and Grade 2 leaks need to be reported telephonically.

30. We grant these exceptions and remove subsection (G) from adopted Rule 11102(b)(III). This change would be overly burdensome for the utilities and PSP Staff, and serious events requiring immediate PSP Staff attention are already covered by the existing rules.

4. Rule 11103(b)(II) – Submission of Annual Report

31. In their exceptions, the Local Governments request that operators be required to: (A) annually report on how the operator met leak survey requirements in Section 11209; and (B) annually certify that the operator met the manufacturer’s specifications for using, maintaining, and calibrating ALDT equipment. The Local Governments argue that this type of reporting is necessary to ensure the PSP has oversight to ensure the ALDT rules are being followed. In response, Public Service argues the addition is redundant and would more provide meaningful new information for enforcement or safety, and would only increase administrative burden on operators and PSP Staff.

32. We deny these exceptions. The adopted rules already require that as part of its annual report, each operator provide a list of “detection technology(ies) for each type of leak survey conducted in the prior calendar year and the leak indicator(s) that the technology(ies) provide(s).” We find this reporting requirement is sufficient at this time and that it will inform the Commission without adding additional administrative burden.

5. Rule 11209 – Advanced Leak Detection Survey Requirements

33. The NOPR’s proposed rule 11209 set forth required intervals for leak surveys using ALDT. In comments, Public Service recommended removing the requirement that operators use ALDT equipment to allow for more flexibility in the selection of leak detection equipment. Adopted Rule 11209 includes this recommendation. In relevant part, it requires operators to “perform all leak detection surveys with the use of leak detection equipment.”

34. In response to exceptions, this change is opposed by the Local Governments and the Joint Environmental Commenters. They state that through this change, the rules do not require the use of ALDT during gas pipeline leak surveys, or at any point in operators’ leak management operations. They highlight the change from the proposed rule that required ALDT use, and argue “this framework maintains the status quo, authorizing continued reliance on legacy leak detection tools, and thus fails to fulfill the Commission’s stated objective in the NOPR ‘to require the use of ALDT.’”⁴ They also argue that because the Recommended Decision does not acknowledge the significance of this change, it is either arbitrary or perhaps even unintended. Alternatively, CSU recommends changing the title of Rule 11209 since it no longer requires “advanced” leak detection technology use.

⁴ Joint Environmental Commenters Response to Exceptions, p. 3; Local Governments Response to Exceptions, p. 4.

35. We grant the exceptions of the Local Governments and Joint Environmental Commenters on this point. Requiring operators to use ALDT in leak surveys conforms with the NOPR and is authorized under statute, and this requirement was a foundational assumption in most of the participants' comments in this proceeding. The Commission finds the balance between requiring ALDT use in leak surveys and the detection thresholds adopted in the ALDT definition is appropriate.

36. Additionally, to align with Rule 11210 and to provide operators with reasonable time to prepare for implementation of these rules, we add to Rule 11209 an effective date of January 1, 2027. We also remove the statement in Rule 11209 that "operators shall schedule leak surveys according to accessibility to the assets each season, as applicable," as unnecessary, and the limiting statement that exceptions to required leak survey intervals will only be made for safety-related delays.

a. Rule 11209(a) – Leak Survey Requirements for Transmission and Gathering Pipelines

37. Regarding Adopted Rule 11209's leak survey intervals, transmission and gathering pipelines in Class 1 and 2 locations (which are in sparsely populated areas) must be surveyed at least once a calendar year, and at intervals not exceeding 15 months. For transmission and gathering pipelines in Class 3 and Class 4 locations, and/or High Consequence Areas ("HCAs"), surveys are required at least four times a calendar year and at intervals not exceeding 4.5 months.

38. Public Service filed exceptions regarding the required intervals for Class 3 and 4 locations and HCAs, explaining that the PHMSA final rule would have required transmission pipelines outside of HCAs to be surveyed annually, at intervals not to exceed 15 months, regardless of class location. Public Service states that large portions of its transmission system are located in

areas with difficult terrain and with extended snow cover, where it would be impossible or unsafe to conduct ground or aerial leak surveys at the prescribed quarterly frequency. It argues the requirement for quarterly surveys should be reserved for pipelines that present the largest risk to public safety – Class 4 transmission pipelines and HCAs in Class 4 locations. Public Service proposes that for HCAs in Class 1, 2, or 3 locations, the required frequency be twice per year, at intervals not to exceed 7.5 months.

39. Joint Environmental Commenters and the Local Governments oppose Public Service’s request and support the adopted rule’s intervals, arguing that Class 3 locations include areas with 46 or more buildings or near recreational areas and should be surveyed more frequently.

40. The Commission grants Public Service’s exception on this issue. We agree that due to the number and locations of Class 3 lines, it is appropriate to require less frequent surveys to reduce the burden of complying with and implementing these rules. Allowing the intervals for leak surveys proposed by Public Service, particularly with the requirement to use ALDT in those surveys, is an improvement over current survey practices.

41. We also make corrections to Adopted Rule 11209(a) to provide consistent descriptions of pipeline locations and areas, changing Class 4 “areas” to “locations” in the new subsection (a)(III) of Rule 11209. We adopt the updated Rule 11209(a) language as shown in Attachments A and B.

b. Rule 11209(b) – Leak Survey Requirements for Distribution Pipelines

42. Adopted Rule 11209(b) sets forth required leak survey intervals for distribution pipelines. We make a clarifying change to subsection (I) of the rule by removing a reference to a

federal regulation and inserting the required leak survey interval contained in the regulation. We also make clarifying changes to subsection (II) of the rule, specifically a typo correction and removing a redundant provision.

43. CSU filed exceptions to Adopted Rule 11209(b)(III), which requires leak surveys of distribution pipelines outside of business district at least once every three calendar years, not to exceed 39 months. Colorado Springs Utilities contends this is a significant deviation from federal leak survey requirements, for the lowest safety risk category of distribution pipelines. CSU argues that an appropriate interval is every five years, not to exceed 63 months.

44. We deny CSU's exception on this issue. While these distribution pipelines may present less of a safety risk compared to other pipeline types, surveys conducted at reasonable intervals may identify leaks that may be small but that over time lead to environmental harm. We do not find the required three year leak survey interval to be overly burdensome.

6. Rule 11210 – Leak Classification and Repair Requirements.

45. Adopted Rule 11210 includes language addressing how ALDT should be used in leak classification. Aligning with our determination to require the use of ALDT in leak surveys, we add "advanced" to the description of leak detection technology in this language and delete "that is not concentration based," as reflected in Attachments A and B.

46. We remove subsection (a) of Adopted Rule 11210, in alignment with our determination to remove Adopted Rule 11102's requirement to telephonically report all leaks and to account for how leak surveys are conducted, compiled, and reviewed, as explained by API Colorado in its exceptions. We are satisfied that operators' long-standing practice of timely investigating leaks posing serious public safety risks, combined with the requirement to classify

leaks within 48 hours of confirmed discovery (contained in what is now subsection (a)), is sufficient.

47. In the new subsection (a) to Rule 11210, we clarify which individuals should perform leak surveys to align with the federal regulatory scheme, and we remove extraneous language regarding how to classify leaks, as reflected in Attachments A and B.

a. Rule 11210(a)(I)(A) – Grade 1 Leak Classification

48. Our NOPR explained that the leak classification for Grade 1 leaks is meant to be the existing Grade 1 standard, in recognition that leaks representing a hazard to persons or property should be repaired immediately, as operators currently do. The Adopted Rules maintain this position, and multiple participants filed exceptions on this. For example, the Local Governments argue that the Grade 1 classification standard should include many specific circumstances, and the Joint Environmental Commenters argue that the classification standard should include leaks with an estimated leakage rate of 100 kg CH₄/hr or more. Public Service opposes these changes.

49. We deny the exceptions filed on this point. The Commission continues to find that for Grade 1 leaks, representing the most serious leaks which pose a public safety risk, existing pipeline operator practices should be maintained.

b. Rule 11210(a)(I)(B) – Grade 2 Leak Classification

50. For Grade 2 leaks, the Local Governments, Joint Environmental Commenters, and PST advocate that a flow rate be included as part of the definition of Grade 2 leaks, which was initially included in the NOPR's proposed Grade 2 leak definition. PST and Joint Environmental Commenters contend Grade 2 leaks should include, for distribution lines, any leak with an estimated leakage rate of 10 scf CH₄ /hr or more; and for transmission and gathering lines, any leak with an estimated leakage rate of 5 kg CH₄ /hr or more. Public Service opposes this addition,

stating that the “purpose of leak classification is to detect and classify leaks based on the risk factors involved, such as location, potential for escalation, and proximity to people or property,” and that requiring the evaluation of flow rate “potentially distracts from the focus on these important characteristics.”⁵

51. Based on the Recommended Decision’s reasoning and the participants’ filings in this proceeding, we deny the request to include a flow rate in Rule 11210(a)(I)(B) at this time because it may distract from a focus on public safety. Through this rulemaking, the Commission is adopting rules imposing new requirements on jurisdictional pipeline operators in Colorado, including standards on ALDT use and leak repair that have not been in our regulations previously. We find that the requirement to use ALDT in leak surveys, combined with mandatory repair timelines for all leak grades, will increase the protection of the environment.

52. We also include a minor modification to Rule 11210(a)(I)(B) to clarify that a Grade 2 leak includes “any leak of LPG, hydrogen gas, or carbon dioxide that does not qualify as a Grade 1 leak.”

c. Rule 11210(a)(I)(C) – Grade 3 Leak Classification

53. For the Grade 3 leak classification standards in Adopted Rule 11210(a)(I)(c), Public Service, Colorado Springs Utilities, and Black Hills argue that “any reading of gas outside the pipe” is ambiguous and overbroad. We grant this exception and simplify the Grade 3 classification so any leaks that are not a Grade 1 or Grade 2 leak are included.

d. Rule 11210(b)(II) – Grade 2 Leak Repair Requirements

54. The Recommended Decision includes that a Grade 2 leak shall be repaired within 12 months after confirmed discovery, and that “when the ground is frozen or otherwise accessible,”

⁵ Public Service Response to Exceptions, p. 9.

the Grade 2 leak shall be monitored and evaluated at least every 6 months after confirmed discovery to ensure that the leak will not become a Grade 1 leak prior to repair.

55. In their exceptions filings, PST, Joint Environmental Commenters, and the Local Governments request a reduction in the repair and monitoring timelines for Grade 2 leaks. Public Service opposes these reductions, stating that the ALJ’s decision appropriately balanced the interests of the participants.

56. Public Service and Colorado Springs Utilities filed exceptions requesting a modification to the repair timelines for Grade 2 leaks to align with other industry recommendations and to allow for scheduling and weather-related considerations. They request that the rule require a Grade 2 leak to be repaired “within 12 months, not to exceed 15 months” or “within one calendar year, not to exceed 15 months.”⁶

57. The Commission denies the exceptions proposing changes to the repair and monitoring timelines for Grade 2 leaks. We find the ALJ appropriately balanced the concerns of the participants, and note that because no repair requirements were imposed prior to these rules, these requirements represent a significant step forward in protecting public safety and the environment. We also decline to further extend the maximum time allowed for repair to 15 months. We do, however, correct a typo in this subsection, changing “accessible” to “inaccessible.”

e. Rule 11210(b)(III) – Grade 3 Leak Repair Requirements

58. The Recommended Decision includes that a Grade 3 leak shall be repaired within 24 months, unless it is scheduled for abandonment within 5 years. In that case, the leak must be evaluated every 12 months to ensure it will not become more significant.

⁶ Colorado Spring Utilities Exceptions, p. 6; Public Service Exceptions, p. 16.

59. In their exceptions filings, PST, Joint Environmental Commenters, and the Local Governments request a reduction in the repair and monitoring timelines for Grade 3 leaks. Public Service opposes these reductions, stating that the ALJ's decision appropriately balanced the interests of the participants.

60. As in their requests for Grade 2 leak repair timelines, Public Service and Colorado Springs Utilities filed exceptions requesting a modification to the repair timelines for Grade 3 leaks to align with other industry recommendations and to allow for scheduling and weather-related considerations. They request that the rule require a Grade 3 leak to be monitored and evaluated at least every 12 months, "not to exceed 15 months."⁷ Colorado Springs Utilities requests additional modifications extending timelines for repair and evaluation.

61. We deny the exceptions proposing changes to the repair and monitoring timelines for Grade 3 leaks. Similar to our conclusion on Grade 2 leak repair timelines, we find the ALJ appropriately balanced the concerns of the participants and note that because no repair requirements were imposed prior to these rules, these requirements represent a significant step forward in protecting public safety and the environment. We also decline to further extend the maximum time allowed for repair and evaluation.

7. Exceptions Requesting Regulation of Type R Pipelines

62. Throughout this proceeding, various participants asked that rules requiring ALDT use in leak surveys and rules imposing repair timelines be applied to Type R gathering lines. The ALJ rejected these requests in the Recommended Decision. On exceptions, PST, Local Governments, and the Joint Environmental Commenters repeat their requests and opposition to the ALJ's determination.

⁷ Colorado Spring Utilities Exceptions, p. 6; Public Service Exceptions, p. 16.

63. We uphold the ALJ’s determination to not apply these rules to Type R gathering lines and agree that the question of such application is outside the scope of this rulemaking proceeding. We therefore deny the exceptions on this point.

II. ORDER

A. The Commission Orders That:

1. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by the American Petroleum Institute Colorado on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

2. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Atmos Energy Corporation on November 4, 2025, are granted, consistent with the discussion above.

3. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by the Pipeline Safety Trust on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

4. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Black Hills Colorado Gas, Inc., on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied, in part, consistent with the discussion above.

5. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Larimer County, Adams County, Boulder County, City and County of Broomfield, City of Longmont, and Colorado Communities for Climate Action (collectively, “Local Governments”) on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

6. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Colorado Springs Utilities on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

7. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Public Service Company of Colorado on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

8. The exceptions to Recommended Decision No. R25-0735, filed by Environmental Defense Fund, 350 Colorado, Earthworks, Citizens for a Healthy Community, Western Colorado Alliance, and GreenLatinos (collectively, “Joint Environmental Commenters”) on November 4, 2025, are granted in part, and denied in part, consistent with the discussion above.

9. The Motion for Oral Argument filed by the Local Governments on November 18, 2025, is denied.

10. The Motion for Oral Argument filed by the Joint Environmental Commenters on November 18, 2025, is denied.

11. The Motion for Leave to File Reply filed by Larimer County on December 9, 2025, is denied.

12. Recommended Decision No. R25-0735 is adopted and modified by this Decision, consistent with the discussion above.

13. The amendments to the Commission’s Rules Regulating Pipeline Operators and Gas Pipeline Safety, 4 *Code of Colorado Regulations* 723-11 attached to this Decision as Attachments A and B are adopted. Attachment A is in legislative (*i.e.*, strikethrough and underline) format, and Attachment B is in final format.

14. The 20-day time period provided by § 40-6-114, C.R.S., to file an Application for Rehearing, Reargument, or Reconsideration shall begin on the first day after the effective date of this Decision.

15. This Decision is effective immediately upon its Issued Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' WEEKLY MEETING
December 23, 2025.**

(S E A L)



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rebecca E. White'.

Rebecca E. White,
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

ERIC BLANK

MEGAN M. GILMAN

TOM PLANT

Commissioners