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Georgia Public Service Commission

(404) 463-6526
(800) 282-5813

244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-5701

FAX: (404) 463-6532
psc.ga.gov

DOCKET# 37093
DOCUMENT#

Docket No. 37093

Tri-County Natural Gas Authority
P. O. Box 247
Union Point, GA 30669

REF: DIMP – Implementation Inspection # JS26-010

☐ Certified Mail ☐ Regular Mail ☒ Email

Attention: Lanier Rhodes

On January 27, 2026, a representative of the Georgia Public Service Commission Pipeline/Facilities Safety Office conducted an inspection of your gas system. The enclosed inspection report numbered JS26-010 is provided for your information and file.

In conjunction with this inspection report, Staff has recommended the following enforcement(s):

Enforcement Action:

- ☒ Notice of Probable Violation
- ☐ Notice of Probable Violation with Proposed Civil Penalty
- ☐ Notice of Amendment

Enforcement Letter:

- ☐ Warning Letter
- ☐ Letter of Concern

Enforcement Notification:

- ☐ Observed Issue
- ☐ No Violation

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Actions, Enforcement Letters, and Notifications Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission. Please refer to Docket No. 37093 in your response.

Please let me know if there are any questions concerning this report at (404) 985-4271 or mthebert@psc.ga.gov. Thank you for your continuing contribution toward increased pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thebert

Michelle L. Thebert
Director, Office of Pipeline Safety/Facilities Protection

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REPORT OF NATURAL GAS SAFETY

INSPECTION NO: JS26-010

OPERATOR: Tri-County Natural Gas Authority

INVESTIGATOR: Jason Smith

INSPECTION DATE: January 27, 2026 REPORT MAILED DATE: July 30, 2026

Any questions concerning this report may be directed to the above address or by telephoning (404) 463-6526.

1. PURPOSE OF INSPECTION

To conduct an inspection of the Operator's implementation of their Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP) for compliance with the minimum federal standards in 49CFR Part 192, SubPart P.

2. CONTINUING VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.181(a)	Each high-pressure distribution system must have valves spaced so as to reduce the time to...	JB22-001	3/7/2022

3. CLEARED VIOLATIONS

4. NEW VIOLATIONS

Violation	Description	Inspection#	Date
192.1007(d)	Identify and implement measures to address risks.	JS26-010	1/27/2026

5. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

SEE ATTACHED INSPECTION REPORT

TRI-COUNTY NATURAL GAS AUTHORITY / DIMP IMPLEMENTATION INSPECTION
INSPECTION NUMBER JS26-010 / DOCKET NUMBER 37093

On January 27, 2026, Pipeline Safety Staff began reviewing Tri-County Natural Gas Authority's Distribution Integrity Management Plan version 5.1.0 (effective: 2023-11-15) for an upcoming DIMP Implementation inspection. On March 4, 2026, Staff reported to the city of Union Point office to perform the Tri-County DIMP Imp. inspection.

During this inspection the Operator was represented by:
Denise Channel - Regulatory Compliance Administrator
Kyle Hamby - MGAG/SRCS (consultant)

Commission Staff was represented by:
Jason Smith - Lead Inspector
Brian Withrow - Pipeline Safety Inspector

At the time of this inspection, Tri-County Natural Gas Authority had two (2) previously existing probable violations. These violations are addressed under Inspection Number JS26-001.

NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

49CFR §192.1007 - What are the required elements of an integrity management plan?
A written integrity management plan must contain procedures for developing and implementing the following elements:
(d) Identify and implement measures to address risks. Determine and implement measures designed to reduce the risks from failure of its gas distribution pipeline. These measures must include an effective leak management program (unless all leaks are repaired when found).

PHMSA Gas Distribution System DIMP Implementation inspection form question #18. Measures to Reduce Risk – Implementation (Update) states: Does documentation reviewed demonstrate that measures to reduce risks per the DIMP plan are being implemented?

COMMENTS: The Operator's DIMP version 5.1.0; in Section 6.2 'Risk Based Additional Actions' their #1 threat 'Excavation – Third Party Damages' are addressed by reporting those excavators not following the State one-call laws, such as but not limited to digging without a valid locate ticket or failing to call in a locate request.

While reviewing their annual 7100 reports, Staff identified the following excavation damages in Tri-County Natural Gas Authority's system:
2021 - 1 reported excavation damage
2022 - 2 reported excavation damages
2023 - none
2024 - 2 reported excavation damages
2025 - 3 reported excavation damages

Staff searched the Commission's GUFPA probable violation reporting system between 1/1/2021 through 12/31/2025, and at the time of this inspection the Operator failed to submit the two, 2022 excavation damages and two of the three, 2025 excavation damages into the GUFPA database. Tri-County Natural Gas explained to Staff that this was just an oversight that they failed to follow their risk based additional action and submit those reports of excavators not following the State one-call law.

PROBABLE VIOLATION: Tri-County Natural Gas Authority failed to demonstrate they followed the implemented measures within their DIMP meant to address risks in their distribution system.

Please review and respond to this report in accordance with the attached Instructions for Responding to Enforcement Letters Issued by the Georgia Public Service Commission.

OPERATOR RESPONSE FORM

Operator Name: Tri-County Natural Gas

Informal Conference Requested: Yes ☐ No ☐

Docket Number: 37093

Responses required within **30 days of electronic mail.** Provide the following information for this report:

Response to Inspection Number:_____

Type of Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:			Informal Conference Requested	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Warning Letter	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Observed Issue	☐ New	☐Continuing	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	$ _____ PCP $ Amount (Total for report)			

Indicate below (A-E) based on the type of Enforcement Actions in this report: (Check all that apply)
Complete a separate copy of Page 2, Operator Response to Enforcement Action, for each cited item.

A. Response for **Notice of Probable Violation** (with and without proposed civil penalty):
   1. ☐ Written statement indicating that corrective measures have achieved Compliance or
   2. ☐ Written plan of action outlining the corrective measures that will be taken to achieve compliance and when compliance is anticipated.

B. Response for **NOA**:
   1. ☐ Contested: Attach written explanation, information, or other material in answer to the allegations in the Notice of Amendment stating your reasons for objecting to the NOA, in whole or in part; or
   2. ☐ Not Contested: Explanation, information, or other material believed to warrant modification of the NOA in whole or in part; or
   3. ☐ Written request for clarification. (Attached)

C. Response for **Continuing** and/or **Existing** violations:
   Current status, updates, expected completion dates, proposed modifications, etc., of the continuing and/or existing violations, even if this information was previously provided. Referencing a previously filed response letter, as status, updates, etc. alone is not sufficient for this response. Failure to provide this information may result in formal interrogatories from the Director through data requests.

D. Response for ☐ **Letter of Concern** / ☐ **Warning Letter**
   I acknowledge receipt of the Letter of Concern/Warning Letter:_____
   SIGNATURE / TITLE

   Additional Comments: (Optional)_____
   _____
   _____

E. Response for **Observed Issue** and **No Violation**: (Optional Response)
   Staff requests that the Operator acknowledge receipt of the Observed Issue/No Violation in writing, or by submitting an email to the FPU Director

Operator Response to Enforcement Action

Enforcement Action for:_____ ☐ New Violation ☐ Continuing Violation
Enter Code / Commission Rule (Complete a separate attachment for each enforcement action)

Enforcement Action(s) cited in report:	Conference Requested:	
☐ Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV)	☐ Yes ☐ No	$_____ Proposed Penalty for this violation
☐ Notice of Amendment (NOA)	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Warning Letter	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Letter of Concern	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Observed Issue	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Proposed Civil Penalty	☐ Yes ☐ No	

OPERATORS RESPONSE: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Response Provided by: _____ Date:_____
Name / Title

Internal use only:

Lead Inspector: _____ Date Response Reviewed:_____

Actions Acceptable: ☐ Yes ☐No Re-inspection Needed:☐ Yes ☐ No Clear Violation:☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

Supervisor Review by:_____ Date Reviewed:_____

Additional Enforcement Recommended: ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

Director Review

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐No Schedule Special Follow-up Inspection: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cleared Violation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:_____

_____

Filings:
For all written responses or any other official correspondence, the Operator shall file the response at the following address:

Ms. Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The Operator must file **five (5)** copies of any response and/or official correspondence, as well as a CD with an electronic version of the response in Microsoft Word and/or a PDF, if applicable.

Informal Conference:
Any Operator who chooses to request an informal conference shall request such a conference through emailing the Director (michellet@psc.state.ga.us), calling the Director (404-463-2765), or selecting the "Request Conference" choice.

Civil Penalty Payments:
Certified check for the full amount of the recommended civil penalty or consent agreement amount made payable to the Georgia Public Service Commission. The Operator's name, applicable Docket No., and Inspection Report No. must be included on the certified check. Mail payment to:

Ms. Michelle Thebert, Director, Facilities Protection Unit
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Hearing Requests:
The Operator has the right to request a hearing before the full Commission to contest the alleged probable violations, recommended civil penalties, and all other proposed actions of enforcement. A request for a hearing must be submitted in writing and in accordance with Commission Rule 515-2-1-.04. The Operator must include a statement of the issues that you intend to raise at the hearing. The issues may relate to the allegations, new information, proposed compliance order, proposed civil penalty, or any other recommendation for enforcement action. Please refer to Commission Rule 515-9-3-.11 and O.C.G.A. § 46-2-91 for assessment considerations upon which civil penalties are based. An operator's failure to specify an issue may result in a waiver of the right to raise that issue at hearing. The request must also indicate whether or not the Operator will be represented by counsel at the hearing.

Open Records and Trade Secret Filings:
The Operator is advised that any material provided to the Commission, and all materials prepared by the Commission, including the Notice of Probable Violations and any Orders issued in this case, may be considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.). If you believe that any portion of your response material is security sensitive, privileged, confidential or may cause your company competitive disadvantages and would qualify for protection under the Commission's "Trade Secret Rule" (Commission Rule 515-3-1-.11), you must, along with the complete original document clearly marked "TRADE SECRET" on each page, provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for trade secret treatment redacted, and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for such trade secret treatment. Should the Commission receive a request for disclosure of any "TRADE SECRET" material, you will be notified, if after review, the materials and your provided justification are deemed not to meet any exemptions provided in the Georgia Open Records Act. You may appeal the Commission's decision to release material at that time. Your appeal will stay the release of those materials until a final decision is made.

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
Tri – County Natural Gas Authority	)	**DOCKET NO. 37093**
	)	
	)	
	)	

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the within and foregoing document on the following persons via email and/or United States Mail as follows:

*Sallie Tanner, Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

*The Honorable Lanier Rhodes, Mayor
Tri-County Natural Gas
P.O. Box 247
Union Point, GA 30669
mayorlrhodes@gmail.com

*Michelle Thebert, Facilities Protection Unit Director
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Respectfully Submitted this 3rd day of August 2026:

Cathy Nesbitt

Cathy Nesbitt, Administrative Assistant
Georgia Public Service Commission
Facilities Protection Unit
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334