

gross vehicle weight rating of 8,500 pounds or less), to bear labels providing information about domestic and foreign content of their equipment. With the affixed label on the new passenger motor vehicle, it serves as an aid to potential purchasers in the selection of new passenger motor vehicles by providing them with information about the value of the U.S./Canadian and foreign parts of each vehicle, the countries of origin of the engine and transmission, and the site of the vehicle's final assembly.

The notice specified a comment closing date of March 9, 2001 (60 days after date of publication). However, on February 22, 2001, we received a request for an extension of the comment closing date from the Association of International Automobile Manufacturers, Inc. (AIAM). The AIAM stated that it would need at least 30 days from release of the agency's evaluation study of the Parts Content Labeling Regulations for review and to allow for public comment thereon in the context of the Paperwork Reduction Act Clearance for 49 CFR Part 583.

NHTSA wants the public to have adequate time to analyze the evaluation study which was released in early March for public comment. Therefore, the request for an additional 30 days from release of the evaluation does not seem excessive. Thus, to provide the AIAM and other interested parties ample time and opportunity to analyze the evaluation study of the Parts Content Labeling Regulations and to present its comment on this proposal, NHTSA believes that there is good cause for the extension of the comment period and that such an extension is consistent with the public interest. Accordingly, the AIAM's request to extend the comment for an additional 30 days from release of the evaluation is granted. The comment period will now close on April 9, 2001.

Dated: March 6, 2001.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 01-5906 Filed 3-8-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-59-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

Pipeline Safety: Closure of Gas Shut-Off Valves Serving Permanently Moored Vessels (PMV) During High-Water Conditions

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an advisory bulletin.

SUMMARY: The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is issuing this advisory to gas distribution pipeline system operators. Operators should examine the shut-off valves controlling gas service to permanently moored vessels (PMV) and ensure that gas service can be quickly shut down, if necessary, even during high-water conditions. In addition, operators should review their operations and maintenance manual and their emergency response manual to ensure that procedures are in place to successfully shut down the flow of gas to PMVs when necessary, including during high-water conditions.

ADDRESSES: This document can be viewed at the OPS home page at: <http://ops.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Huriaux, (202) 366-4565, or by e-mail, richard.huriaux@rspa.dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On September 27, 2000, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommended that the Research and Special Programs Administration "require corrective action as appropriate to ensure that pipeline operators have the means to shut off the flow of natural gas to permanently moored vessels in a timely manner, even during periods of high-water conditions" (Safety Recommendation P-00-14).

This recommendation resulted from NTSB's investigation of a natural gas leak on a permanently moored vessel (PMV), the *President Casino* on the *Admiral*, on April 4, 1998. The *Admiral* was struck by barges that detached from a tow during high-water conditions on the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. The *Admiral* lost most of its mooring lines, causing the barge to rotate away from the quay, severing the gas service line. The natural gas did not ignite, but an emergency repair crew was unable to shut off the gas supply because the flooded regulator pit made it impossible to reach the shut-off valve. After three

hours the crew was able to clamp-off the line and stop the flow of gas.

The local gas distribution company has taken action to ensure that all service line shut-off valves controlling gas flow to PMVs are provided with a means to stop the flow of gas, even during high-water conditions. It will either locate gas service line valves where they will not be affected by flooding or install equipment, such as extra-height operators or valve key guides, that will allow service valves to be readily operated during flood conditions.

There are hundreds of PMVs in U.S. waters. This incident highlights the need to evaluate the accessibility and operability of gas service line valves serving PMVs. Although not all these valves are subject to potential high-water conditions, gas distribution pipeline system operators serving PMVs should ensure that they can promptly shut down the flow of natural gas to PMVs, even during high-water conditions.

The Federal pipeline safety regulations require that "each service line must have a shut-off valve in a readily accessible location * * *" (49 CFR 192.365(b)). This implies that the valve must be operable under all reasonably anticipated conditions. For PMVs, it is reasonable to anticipate that high-water and flooding might occur. Operators should review their operations and maintenance manual and their emergency response manual to ensure that procedures are in place to successfully shut down the gas to PMVs when necessary, including during high-water conditions. (49 CFR 192.605).

II. Advisory Bulletin (ADB-01-01)

To: Owners and Operators of Gas Distribution Systems.

Subject: Closure of Gas Shut-Off Valves Serving Permanently Moored Vessels (PMV) During High-Water Conditions

Purpose: To advise gas distribution pipeline system owners and operators of the need to examine the location and functionality of shut-off valves to make sure they can promptly shut down the flow of gas, even in the event of high-water conditions.

Advisory: Owners and operators of gas distribution pipeline systems should examine the location of gas shut-off valves serving PMVs to ensure that they can be located and used, even during high-water conditions. If not, the valves should be moved to a location above the reasonably anticipated high-water mark or equipped to be readily accessible during high-water events. In addition, operators should review their operations

and maintenance manual and their emergency response manual to ensure that procedures are in place to successfully shut down the gas to PMVs, when necessary, including during high-water conditions.

Issued in Washington, DC on February 20, 2001.

Stacey L. Gerard,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 01-5824 Filed 3-8-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA)

[Docket No. RSPA-00-8452; Notice 2]

Duke Energy; Grant of Waiver and Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Office of Pipeline Safety, Research and Special Programs Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of grant of waiver and finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is approving a waiver of certain regulatory requirements relating to class location changes on fifteen natural gas pipeline segments (the "waiver segments") operated by Duke Energy (Duke) and is permitting Duke to carry out alternative risk control activities (the "Activities") in lieu of compliance with these requirements. The waiver segments are located on the three parallel lines 10, 15, and 25, downstream from the Mt. Pleasant Compressor Station. The waiver segments lie in Maury and Williamson Counties, Tennessee. The waiver segments include five locations in a 3-line system, ranging from 0.5 miles to 0.88 miles in length and totaling 12.2 miles.

Background

In 1997, OPS selected Duke Energy (Duke) as a candidate for participation in the Risk Management Demonstration Program; subsequently, OPS and Duke held discussions as part of a consultation process. During the consultation, Duke identified a portion of its system where it believed performing alternative risk control activities (the "Activities") in lieu of compliance with current pipeline safety regulations addressing class location changes would result in a comparable margin of safety and environmental protection. While OPS and Duke continued to consult, Duke applied for a temporary waiver of certain regulatory requirements for the waiver segments

and implementation of the Activities in lieu of compliance. Duke had previously reduced the operating pressure along the fifteen waiver segments in accordance with these requirements and sought to return the pipeline to its historical operating pressure. Duke had completed many of the proposed alternative risk control activities related to assuring integrity of the pipeline in the segments for which regulatory waiver was sought. Discussions continue between OPS and Duke regarding programmatic aspects of the company's risk management demonstration project.

Alternative Approach

Rather than replacing pipe, as required for each waiver segment under 49 CFR § 192.611 in order to increase operating pressure, Duke proposed to perform the following alternative risk control activities, with the objective of providing a margin of safety and environmental protection comparable to pipe replacement:

1. Internally inspect the waiver segments using geometry and magnetic flux leakage in-line inspection tools, which are not required under current regulations. These tools identify indications of wall loss (e.g. corrosion), as well as dents and gouges from initial construction damage or third party excavators working along the pipeline right-of-way. These internal inspections have been performed and the OPS Southern Region has reviewed the inspection results.

2. Internally inspect approximately 166 miles of additional pipe on the three parallel lines in the Mt. Pleasant Discharge. These internal inspections have been performed and the OPS Southern Region has reviewed the inspection results.

3. Investigate dents upon completion of the dent inspections for an extended length of pipe (the "extended segments") bordering and including each waiver segment to further extend the benefits of the integrity analysis. The extended segments cover a length of pipe totaling 660 feet on both ends of each waiver segment. These internal inspections have been performed and the OPS Southern Region has reviewed the inspection results.

4. Repair indications of corrosion, existing construction damage, and existing outside force damage identified by the internal inspection. Duke used more conservative investigation and repair criteria in the proposed waiver and extended segments than is currently required by the pipeline safety regulations. The criteria used by Duke call for investigation and repairs of

small dents and anomalies that are well below the threshold where pipeline integrity might be compromised.

5. Perform hydrostatic tests of the portions of Line 10 which have not previously been tested to 100 percent (SMYS). This includes two of the waiver segments, 2.5 miles northwest of Rally Hill in Maury County and 3.5 miles east-northeast of Arrington in Williamson County. These hydrostatic tests have been completed.

6. Perform enhanced damage prevention activities including implementing selected recommendations from a recent study of one-call systems and damage prevention programs best practice, "Common Ground". Duke will also install, for a trial period of one year, the TransWave monitoring system covering all of the waiver segments. This system will be tested to determine its reliability and usefulness for detecting third-party encroachments (construction, excavation, etc.) in the pipeline right-of-way.

Notice 1

In response to Duke's application and justification for performing the Activities in lieu of current regulatory requirements, OPS issued a Notice of Intent to Consider Waiver and Environmental Assessment of Waiver, inviting persons to submit written comments (65 FR 77419; December 11, 2000) (Notice 1). In that Notice, OPS explained its finding that Duke's implementation of the Activities in lieu of compliance with 49 CFR 192.611 is consistent with safety. OPS received no public comments in response to Notice 1.

OPS Review

OPS has compared the expected risk reduction produced by the Activities to that which would be achieved by compliance with 49 CFR § 192.611 and concluded that the Activities will likely achieve a comparable margin of safety and environmental protection.

OPS has determined that the conduct of the Activities in lieu of compliance with 49 CFR § 192.611 is consistent with pipeline safety. The following factors were considered when making this determination:

1. The proposed Activities will provide a comparable margin of safety and protection for the environment and the communities in the vicinity of Duke's pipelines.

2. Duke's risk-based justification of the alternatives to the class location change regulations is technically sound.

3. The fifteen waiver segments have a good integrity history, with no leaks