

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

[Docket No. NHTSA-2003-16480]

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Decision That Nonconforming 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe Passenger Cars Are Eligible for Importation**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of petition for decision that nonconforming 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars are eligible for importation.

SUMMARY: This document announces receipt by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of a petition for a decision that 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars that were not originally manufactured to comply with all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards are eligible for importation into the United States because (1) they are substantially similar to vehicles that were originally manufactured for sale in the United States and that were certified by their manufacturer as complying with the safety standards, and (2) they are capable of being readily altered to conform to the standards.

DATES: The closing date for comments on the petition is December 17, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments should refer to the docket number and notice number, and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590 (docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Coleman Sachs, Office of Vehicle Safety Compliance, NHTSA (202-366-3151).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Under 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A), a motor vehicle that was not originally manufactured to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards shall be refused admission into the United States unless NHTSA has decided that the motor vehicle is

substantially similar to a motor vehicle originally manufactured for importation into and sale in the United States, certified under 49 U.S.C. 30115, and of the same model year as the model of the motor vehicle to be compared, and is capable of being readily altered to conform to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Petitions for eligibility decisions may be submitted by either manufacturers or importers who have registered with NHTSA pursuant to 49 CFR part 592. As specified in 49 CFR 593.7, NHTSA publishes notice in the **Federal Register** of each petition that it receives, and affords interested persons an opportunity to comment on the petition. At the close of the comment period, NHTSA decides, on the basis of the petition and any comments that it has received, whether the vehicle is eligible for importation. The agency then publishes this decision in the **Federal Register**.

Sunshine Car Import L.C. of Cape Coral, Florida ("SCI") (Registered Importer 01-289) has petitioned NHTSA to decide whether 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars originally manufactured for sale in foreign markets are eligible for importation into the United States. The vehicles which SCI believes are substantially similar are 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars that were manufactured for sale in the United States and certified by their manufacturer as conforming to all applicable Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

The petitioner claims that it carefully compared non-U.S. certified 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars to their U.S.-certified counterparts, and found the vehicles to be substantially similar with respect to compliance with most Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

SCI submitted information with its petition intended to demonstrate that non-U.S. certified 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars, as originally manufactured, conform to many Federal motor vehicle safety standards in the same manner as their U.S. certified counterparts, or are capable of being readily altered to conform to those standards.

Specifically, the petitioner claims that non-U.S. certified 1999 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe passenger cars are identical to their U.S. certified counterparts with respect to compliance with Standard Nos. 101 *Controls and Displays*, 102 *Transmission Shift Lever Sequence*, 103 *Defrosting and Defogging Systems*, 104 *Windshield Wiping and Washing Systems*, 105 *Hydraulic Brake Systems*, 106 *Brake Hoses*, 109 *New*

Pneumatic Tires, 113 *Hood Latch Systems*, 114 *Theft Protection*, 116 *Brake Fluid*, 124 *Accelerator Control Systems*, 201 *Occupant Protection in Interior Impact*, 202 *Head Restraints*, 204 *Steering Control Rearward Displacement*, 205 *Glazing Materials*, 206 *Door Locks and Door Retention Components*, 207 *Seating Systems*, 208 *Occupant Crash Protection*, 209 *Seat Belt Assemblies*, 210 *Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages*, 212 *Windshield Mounting*, 216 *Roof Crush Resistance*, 219 *Windshield Zone Intrusion*, 301 *Fuel System Integrity*, and 302 *Flammability of Interior Materials*.

The petitioner states that the vehicles also comply with the Bumper Standard found in 49 CFR part 581.

The petitioner also contends that the vehicles are capable of being readily altered to meet the following standards, in the manner indicated:

Standard No. 108 *Lamps, Reflective Devices and Associated Equipment*: inspection of all vehicles and installation of U.S.-model headlamps, tail lamps, side markers, and high mounted stop lamps on vehicles that are not already so equipped.

Standard No. 110 *Tire Selection and Rims*: installation of a tire information placard.

Standard No. 111 *Rearview Mirror*: replacement of the passenger side rearview mirror with a U.S.-model component or inscription of the required warning statement on the mirror's face.

Standard No. 118 *Power Window Systems*: inspection of all vehicles and installation, in vehicles that are not already so equipped, of a relay in the power window system so that the window transport will not operate with the ignition switched off.

Standard No. 214 *Side Impact Protection*: inspection of all vehicles to ensure that they are equipped with door beams identical to those in the U.S. certified model and installation of those components on vehicles that are not already so equipped.

The petitioner states that all vehicles must be inspected for compliance with the Theft Prevention Standard found in 49 CFR 541, and that an anti-theft system capable of immobilizing the vehicle must be installed in any vehicles that are not already so equipped.

The petitioner also states that a vehicle identification plate must be affixed to the vehicles near the left windshield post and a reference and certification label must be affixed in the area of the left front door post to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 565. The petitioner further states that a

certification label must be affixed to the driver's doorjamb to meet the requirements of 49 CFR part 567.

Interested persons are invited to submit comments on the petition described above. Comments should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590 (docket hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). It is requested but not required that 10 copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated above will be considered, and will be available for examination in the docket at the above address both before and after that date. To the extent possible, comments filed after the closing date will also be considered. Notice of final action on the petition will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30141(a)(1)(A) and (b)(1); 49 CFR 593.8; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8.

Issued on: November 12, 2003.

Kenneth N. Weinstein,

Associate Administrator for Enforcement.

[FR Doc. 03-28622 Filed 11-14-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

Pipeline Safety: Guidance on When the Baseline Integrity Assessment Begins

AGENCY: Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of advisory bulletin.

SUMMARY: This document provides guidance to operators of gas transmission pipelines on the requirement in 49 U.S.C. 60109 that operators begin the baseline integrity assessment of pipeline segments located in high consequence areas no later than June 17, 2004. Trade associations representing natural gas pipeline companies affected by this requirement, have asked for guidance on what actions an operator must take to begin a baseline assessment. This document provides guidance to gas transmission operators on what initial steps RSPA/OPS expects each operator to take to begin the baseline integrity assessment to meet the intent of the statute.

General Information

You may contact the Dockets Facility by phone at (202) 366-9329, for copies of this document or other material in the docket. All materials in this docket may be accessed electronically at <http://dms.dot.gov/search>. Once you access this address, type in the last four digits of the docket number shown at the beginning of this notice (in this case 7666), and click on search. You will then be connected to all relevant information.

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Israni by phone at (202) 366-4571, by fax at (202) 366-4566, or by e-mail at mike.israni@rspa.dot.gov, regarding the subject matter of this guidance. General information about the RSPA/OPS programs may be obtained by accessing RSPA's Home page at <http://RSPA.dot.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Federal Pipeline Safety Statute (49 U.S.C. 60109(c)) requires that RSPA/OPS issue regulations, by December 17, 2003, establishing requirements for integrity management programs for gas transmission pipelines in high consequence areas. The statute also imposes requirements directly on gas pipeline operators. The statute requires each gas pipeline operator to adopt an integrity management program for pipeline segments located in high consequence areas by December 17, 2004, and to begin the baseline integrity assessment of those segments no later than June 17, 2004. The statute requires that an operator complete the baseline assessment on all the operator's gas transmission pipeline segments in high consequence areas by December 17, 2012, with at least 50 percent of those segments being assessed no later than December 17, 2006. An operator must also reassess each of the segments every 7 years.

Trade associations that represent gas pipeline operators have requested guidance on what actions are necessary for an operator to have begun the required baseline assessment process by the statutory deadline. This advisory

bulletin gives guidance on the actions RSPA/OPS expects an operator to take by June 17, 2004 for the operator to be considered as having begun the baseline assessment.

On August 6, 2002, RSPA/OPS published a final rule defining high consequence areas, *i.e.* those areas for which additional protections are required (67 FR 50824). RSPA/OPS initiated the rulemaking on integrity management program requirements with a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), published January 28, 2003 (68 FR 4278), that proposed substantive requirements to establish integrity management programs and modifications to the high consequence area definition to better identify population potentially impacted by a pipeline failure. A final rule has not yet been issued. RSPA/OPS published an advisory bulletin on July 17, 2003 (68 FR 42456) providing guidance on steps RSPA/OPS expects gas transmission operators to take to determine "identified sites" along the pipeline, one of the components of the high consequence area definition.

RSPA/OPS expects that by June 17, 2004, an operator will have identified many high consequence areas along its transmission pipelines through operation and maintenance activities on the pipeline right-of-way, including patrolling, that the operator conducts on a routine basis, and through the guidance RSPA/OPS provided on how to determine the identified sites component with the help of emergency response officials. An operator will also have integrated all available data and information the operator has available on those high consequence areas to prioritize segments that are high risk, and to have begun selecting the assessment method best suited for each segment and scheduling the assessment of the high risk segments.

Advisory Bulletin (ADB-03-07)

To: Operators of gas transmission pipelines.

Subject: The requirement in 49 U.S.C. 60109 (c) that each operator begin the baseline integrity assessment of segments in high consequence areas no later than June 17, 2004.

Purpose: To provide guidance to operators on what steps RSPA/OPS considers acceptable to begin the baseline integrity assessment process to meet the intent of the statute.

Advisory: RSPA/OPS will accept the following steps as having begun the baseline assessment process required by 49 U.S.C. 60109 (c).

Prior to June 17, 2004, each operator must have begun to—