U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Research and
Special Programs
Administration**

The Administrator

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

DEC 10, 2002

The Honorable Carol J. Carmody
Acting Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Carmody:

This letter responds to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Safety Recommendations P-02-01 and P-02-02, which address acceptance criteria for wrinkle bends in pipe and updated accident reports to the National Response Center (NRC), respectively. RSPA requests that P-02-01 be classified as "Open - Acceptable Response" based on the information provided in the enclosure.

We understand that NTSB will be classifying Recommendation P-02-02 as "Closed - Acceptable Action" based on our prompt issuance of an advisory bulletin, *Required Notification of National Response Center*. This advisory (67 FR 57060) was issued to gas and hazardous liquid pipeline and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility operators on September 6, 2002. It seeks to ensure that telephonic reports of pipeline incidents to the National Response Center (NRC) are prompt, accurate, and fully communicate the estimated extent of the damages. The advisory makes clear that the operator should make additional reports if there is a significant change in the estimate of product release, extent of the damage, or the number of deaths or injuries. A copy is enclosed for your information.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact me or Patricia Klinger, Director of External Communications, at (202) 366-4831.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen G. Engleman

Enclosures

cc: Robert Chipkevich, NTSB
Rod Dyck, NTSB

RSPA Initial Response to NTSB Safety Recommendation P-02-01

P-02-01 **Establish quantitative criteria, based on engineering evaluations, for determining whether a wrinkle may be allowed to remain in a pipeline.**

Status: Initial RSPA response to recommendation.

Actions: Working with ASME B31.4 and B31.8 to develop acceptance criteria for wrinkles and buckles in in-service pipelines.

Initial Response:

RSPA engineers are now reviewing domestic and international pipeline standards and literature on stress analysis of pipe with wrinkles and buckles. We are working with standards committees ASME B31.4 and B31.8 to develop wrinkle acceptance criteria. Both standards already have acceptance criteria for wrinkles in field bent pipes used in new construction. RSPA staff has raised the issue of quantitative acceptance criteria for wrinkles with the ASME B31.4 committee. We will discuss this issue further with the ASME B31.8 committee during the next meeting.

Action Requested: RSPA requests that Safety Recommendation P-02-01 be classified as "Open - Acceptable Response" based on the ongoing research and standards committee activities.

action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed project is necessary to maintain US 101 as a functional state lifeline highway route. The proposed project will involve a replacement bridge crossing of Spencer Creek on US 101 and construction of stable approaches to the bridge. The original Spencer Creek bridge, built in 1947 and located about six miles north of Newport, Oregon has deteriorated to the point that it has been determined unsafe and closed to traffic. A temporary bridge was constructed in 1999 immediately shoreward of the old bridge and has a design service life of five to eight years. Consequently, the existing Spencer Creek Bridge across the stream must be replaced. The sea cliffs and embankments that support the US 101 approaches to the old and temporary bridges are adjacent to the beach and are unstable. They have been substantially damaged from erosion caused by waves attacking the sea cliff. Landslides have also damaged the existing highway, and may pose hazards further inland. Consequently, any long term solution to the bridge problem will also need to involve stabilization of roadway approaches to any bridge crossing Spencer Creek in order to maintain the state lifeline highway route.

Possible Build Alternatives that will be considered as the proposed project develops will involve two basic concepts. The first concept would generally follow the existing alignment of US 101. The second concept would realign the highway inland and away from the beach. Depending on the location of the highway under either concept, shoreline stabilization may be required. As required by NEPA, a No-Build Alternative will be considered to provide an understanding about what will happen if nothing is done to solve the problem. The DEIS will address the No-Build Alternative and one or more Build Alternatives.

While the FHWA will be the lead agency for preparing the EIS, the COE will be a cooperating agency. Under section 103 of the 1962 River and Harbor Act, the COE has approved funding for planning, engineering and environmental investigations for shoreline stabilization options that would protect US 101 highway facilities along the beach. The COE is expected to consider as part of the proposed action some or all of the following design options—off shore breakwater, terracing the sea cliff, sea cliff toe armoring, and beach nourishment. Pursuant to the NEPA, the COE's analysis of the proposed action will be incorporated into the EIS.

Public workshops, meetings, and a public open house will be held as needed to identify an adequate range of reasonable alternatives, review alternatives, and aid in selection of an alternative. Appropriate notice to interested parties will be provided for all public gatherings regarding the proposed.

The EIS process will combine COE, and FHWA/ODOT work into one series of environmental documents (*e.g.*, technical reports, DEIS, and Final EIS). In conjunction with the FHWA's Record of Decision for the Final EIS, the COE will make a determination regarding the proposed action impacts as required by NEPA for inclusion into their Record of Decision.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to the proposed action are addressed and potentially significant and insignificant issues identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal Programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on: August 28, 2002.

Elton Chang,

Environmental Engineer, Oregon Division.

[FR Doc. 02–22678 Filed 9–5–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

Pipeline Safety: Required Notification of National Response Center

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of advisory bulletin.

SUMMARY: The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is issuing this advisory to owners and operators of gas distribution, gas transmission, and hazardous liquid pipeline systems, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities. Owners and operators should ensure that telephonic reports of incidents to the National Response Center (NRC) are both prompt and accurate and fully communicate the estimated extent of the damages. Additional reports should be made if there is a significant change in an estimate of the size of the gas or liquid release, the extent of the damage, or the number of deaths or injuries.

OPS is issuing this advisory bulletin to ensure that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the OPS are notified (via the NRC) when the information provided in the initial telephonic report significantly changes due to new information available soon after the initial report.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roger Little, (202) 366–4569; or by e-mail, *roger.little@rspa.dot.gov*. This document can be viewed at the OPS home page at *http://ops.dot.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The pipeline safety regulations require gas pipeline, hazardous liquid pipeline, and LNG facility operators to make a telephonic report of a pipeline incident to the NRC in Washington, DC at the earliest practicable opportunity. For the purposes of this document, the term incident will refer to either an incident, an accident, a leak or a spill (the term differs in the regulations depending on whether the release involves gas, hazardous liquid or LNG). The information required to be reported includes the name of the operator, the name and telephone number of the person making the report, the location of the incident, the number of fatalities and injuries, and all other relevant significant facts. (49 CFR 191.5, 193.2011, and 195.52.)

Because an operator is required to make a telephonic report at the earliest practicable moment following discovery, an operator normally provides the first telephonic notification one to two hours after it discovers an incident on its pipeline. Additional information on the nature, cause, and extent of the damage usually becomes available as emergency response proceeds. If this additional information leads to a significant change (greater or lesser) in the estimated amount of product released, the estimated number of fatalities and injuries, the extent of environmental damage, or the extent of property damage, the operator should make an additional telephonic report to the NRC. OPS considers a significant change to include any of the following:

1. An increase or decrease in the number of previously reported injuries or fatalities;

2. A revised estimate of the product release amount that is at least 10 times greater than the amount reported; for example, the initial reported amount of product released was 300 barrels and the revised estimated amount is 3,000 barrels;