

PI-72-0114

December 19, 1972

Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Roscher
P. O. Box 162
Washington, New Jersey 07402

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Roscher

This is in reference to your letter of November 24, 1972, further concerning a gas pipeline marker, placed in front of your home, about which we had earlier corresponded. You have again expressed concern over what you consider the unsightliness of the marker with its possible effect on property values and have requested that we give the Matter our further attention.

As we explained in our letter of October 2, 1972, the Federal regulations require that each gas transmission be marked to identify its location in order to reduce the possibility of damage or interference. The regulations do not specify a marker's size or design. In your case, the marker does not appear to violate any Federal standard.

You appreciate, of course, that it is primarily for the safety of persons such as yourselves, who live in close proximity to gas pipelines, that the line markers are placed in recent accidents, a number of people have been killed or seriously injured because contractors unknowingly dug into gas pipelines. Such accidents indicate the importance of having lines well marked.

Because of your overriding concern for the appearance of the marker, we contacted Mr. Peter Kassak, Vice President, Elizabethtown Gas Company. We understand from Mr. Kassak that while there are a number of residences near you, the general area is subject further development. Because water and sewer mains will be installed and other construction undertaken as the area is built up, the existing gas line will be subject to disturbance. Therefore, the company considers it essential for safety that their line be clearly marked.

To further indicate the basis for the company's concern for the safety of persons living in the vicinity of gas pipelines; they report that their one company alone experiences over 200 mains dug up and damaged by others each year. Each of these incidents is a potential accident which could cause loss of life or injury. The company is also subject to regulation by the State of New Jersey which is seeking to reduce the incidence of contractors digging into gas pipelines.

We understand from Mr. Kassak that the marker is approximately 40 feet from your house. Mr. Kassak has personally inspected the marker and believes that it could be lowered to approximately three feet. It is anticipated that the company Will be taking action in that regard in the near future.

I trust that the matter between you and the gas company will be shortly concluded to your mutual satisfaction.

Sincerely,
Joseph C. Caldwell
Director
Office of Pipeline Safety

November 24, 1972

Gerhard Roscher
P.O. Box 162
Washington, N.J. 07882
Office of the Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

Attention of: Mr. Joseph C. Caldwell, Director, Office of Pipeline Safety

Dear Sirs

This is in reply to your letter of October 2, 1972 regarding gas pipe line markers which the Elizabethtown Gas Company has installed in our area.

Your letter was in answer to ours of September 32, 1972 in which we expressed our dissatisfaction in having a five foot high, two inch yellow pipe marker placed in front of our home; about 12 inches from the front entrance steps.

We had stated that we had notified the Elizabethtown Gas Company about our objection to such an unsightly marker in front of our home, which is in a residential built-up section, but to this date no changes have been made, either to change the location of the marker or reduce the size of it.

We wish to inform you that we have talked with one of the leading real estate dealers, Mr. Russell Hamlen, here in Washington, N.J., regarding this environmental eyesore, and his reaction was, that any home buyer certainly would disapprove of this five feet high, two inch yellow marker in its present location.

We realize that, for safety sake, gas main markers are essential; but it is equally important that property values in a well kept environment are not jeopardized by placing markers of this size.

As senior citizens we do not want to be unduly demanding, but do not want to be discriminated against, either, if it effects a life's savings in the form of value in a home.

Thank you for your offer of further assistance. May we ask that you give this matter further attention?

Very truly yours,
Mr. & Mrs. Roscher

P. S. A copy of the letter which we sent to the Elizabethtown Gas Company is enclosed.

October 2, 1972

Mr. & Mrs. Gerhard Roscher
P. o. Box 162
Washington, New Jersey 07882

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Roscher:

This is in reply to your letter of September 12, 1972 informing this office that the Elizabethtown Gas Company has installed a five-foot high two inch yellow pipe marker near the front entrance of your home. You ask, in effect, whether such markers are governed by Federal safety standards.

We are unable to determine from your letter what kind of lines are being marked. Insofar as buried natural gas lines may be concerned, the present Federal regulations speak only to the marking of transmission lines and, for these, require only that they be marked to indicate location in order to reduce the possibility of damage or interference. The decision as to the size and design of the marker is left to the gas pipeline operator. For gas distribution lines (including individual home service lines) there are at present no Federal marking requirements. Thus, in your case, to the extent that gas transmission or distribution lines are involved, the markers in question do not appear to violated an Federal regulations nor is their size or design specified in Federal standards.

You state that you are in the process of contacting the Elizabethtown Gas Company in this matter. That company would be in the best position to disclose the reasons for their marking, and to advise you with regard to the possibility of using a smaller marker.

I hope this explaining the nature and extent of the Federal regulations in this situation. If we may be of further assistance, please call on us.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
Frank E. Fulton
Joseph C. Caldwell
Director
Office of Pipeline Safety

Gerhard Reseher
P.O. Box 162
Washington, N.J.
07882

September 14, 1972

Office of Pipeline Safety
Department of Transportation
400 Sixth Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Attention Mr. Joseph C. Caldwell, Director, Offices of Pipeline Safety

Dear Sirs

Very recently, the Elizabethtown Gas Company, installed pipeline markers in our area. One of these markers has been placed in front of our residence, within one foot of our front entrance steps, which places it in the middle of our property frontage.

We notified the Elizabethtown Gas Company of our objection to such an unsightly marker in front of our home, which is in a residential built-up area. The marker is a five foot high, two inch pipe, painted yellow.

Since we are senior citizens and do not know when we might have to sell this home, we feel the property value has declined with the placement of this large unsightly marker.

In our opinion, a more suitable nearby place could be found to set a marker, or a smaller marker, perhaps on foot high, instead of five foot high, would suffice.

We have contacted the local office of the Elizabethtown Gas Company at New Village, New Jersey, but as yet have not been able to get a satisfactory answer to our complaint.

The area in question, our home, is located on Kinneman Avenue, Washington, New Jersey.

We should appreciate having the ruling of the Federal Safety Standards for Gas Pipelines reviewed, and necessary adjustments made so that property values of homes are not jeopardized with installations of unnecessarily huge markers, in such extremely conspicuous location.

Will you please give this matter your kind attention, and let us know your decision at your earliest convenience,

We thank you.

Very truly yours,
Mr. & Mrs. Roscher