



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

SEP 25 2000

Honorable Kelley S. Coyner
Administrator
Research and Special Programs Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Ms. Coyner:

Thank you for your July 21, 2000, letter in response to the National Transportation Safety Board's Safety Recommendation I-00-6 that was issued to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) as a result of the Board's investigation of two cargo tank unloading incidents in Louisville, Kentucky, on November 19, 1998, and in Whitehall, Michigan, on June 4, 1999.

I-00-6

Within 1 year of the issuance of this safety recommendation, complete rulemaking on Docket HM-223 "Applicability of the Hazardous Materials Regulations to Loading, Unloading, and Storage," to establish, for all modes of transportation, safety requirements for loading and unloading hazardous materials.

The Safety Board understands that RSPA is currently drafting a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking under Docket HM-223. Publication date is currently scheduled for early 2001, with a final rule expected by the end of 2001. As stated in our accident report, the Safety Board is concerned that the lack of progress by RSPA in the HM-223 rulemaking indicates that the Department of Transportation is not providing sufficient direction to ensure that personnel involved in safety-critical unloading operations are properly trained and provided with clear written procedures. Given the thousands of different hazardous materials that are loaded, transported, and unloaded on a daily basis and the potential risks associated with those materials, the training of personnel transferring these materials is extremely important. The Board urges RSPA to complete rulemaking on Docket HM-223 by July of next year. Because of our concern regarding this important safety issue, Safety Recommendation I-00-6 is classified "Open—Unacceptable Response."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Hall", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Jim Hall
Chairman

cc: Mr. Robert Clarke, Safety and Health Team Leader
Office of Transportation Policy Development

