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National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of the Chairman

April 6, 1999

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

Dear Ms. Coyner:

The National Transportation Safety Board has reviewed your March 16, 1999, letter in response to Safety Recommendation P-98-25, which was issued to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) as a result of the Safety Board's investigation of the October 23, 1996, natural gas pipeline rupture and fire in Tiger Pass, Louisiana.

The recommendation asked that RSPA require pipeline system operators to precisely locate and place permanent markers at sites where their gas and hazardous liquid pipelines cross navigable waterways. The Safety Board understands that RSPA has participated in regional meetings to identify stakeholders' concerns about the nation's Maritime Transportation System, which, in turn, became the framework for issues addressed by a November 1998 national conference of government and industry leaders. The safety of pipelines crossing navigable waterways was identified as an area of concern at the public meetings and the 1998 conference.

The Safety Board understands that, as a result of the regional meetings and the 1998 conference, RSPA is now heading a subcommittee formed specifically to identify appropriate and integrated solutions for the actions requested in Safety Recommendation P-98-25. The subcommittee, which is comprised of safety and dredging groups, includes representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Coast Guard, and the Maritime Administration. Pending further response on this initiative, Safety Recommendation P-98-25 has been classified "Open—Acceptable Response."

Thank you for your prompt action and commitment to pipeline safety. !

Sincerely,

Jim Hall

Jim Hall
Chairman

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