

from NTSB

August 21, 2005

Ms. Stacey L. Gerard
Acting Assistant Administrator/Chief Safety Officer
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Ms. Gerard:

Thank you for your May 26, 2005, response to the National Transportation Safety Board regarding Safety Recommendations P-03-2 and -3. The Safety Board issued these recommendations to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), formerly the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), on February 27, 2003, as a result of the Board's investigation of the pipeline accident investigation of a natural gas pipeline rupture and fire near Carlsbad, New Mexico, on August 19, 2000. The Safety Board classified Safety Recommendation P-03-2 "Closed—Acceptable Action," on April 21, 2004, based on information provided in RSPA's February 25, 2004, letter; Safety Recommendation P-03-3 is stated below.

P-03-3

Evaluate the Office of Pipeline Safety's pipeline operator inspection program to identify deficiencies that resulted in the failure of inspectors, before the Carlsbad, New Mexico, accident, to identify the inadequacies in El Paso Natural Gas Company's internal corrosion control program. Implement the changes necessary to ensure adequate assessments of pipeline operator safety programs.

The Safety Board notes that PHMSA recently completed an extensive evaluation of the Office of Pipeline Safety's pipeline operator inspection program and has published the final gas integrity management inspection protocols. In addition, PHMSA has developed a new enforcement tracking system and provided training on internal pipeline corrosion to Federal and State inspectors that perform gas integrity management inspections. Accordingly, Safety Recommendation P-03-3 is classified "Closed—Acceptable Action."

Thank you for your comprehensive response to this important safety issue and your commitment to pipeline safety.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Mark V. Rosenker
Acting Chairman

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Linda Lawson, Director
Office of Safety, Energy, and Environment