

February 5, 2003

Honorable Ellen G. Engleman
Administrator
Research and Special Programs Administration
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Ms. Engleman:

Thank you for your December 10, 2002, response to the National Transportation Safety Board regarding Safety Recommendations P-02-1 and -2, stated below. These recommendations were made to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) on August 2, 2002, as a result of the Safety Board's investigation of the April 7, 2000, pipeline failure at the Chalk Point Generating Station in southeastern Prince George's County, Maryland.

P-02-1

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

RSPA reports that it is working with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) to revise standards ASME B31.4 and B31.8 to develop acceptance criteria for wrinkles and buckles in in-service pipelines. RSPA engineers are now reviewing domestic and international pipeline standards and literature on stress analysis of pipe with wrinkles and buckles, and the agency is working with the ASME B31.4 and B31.8 standards committees to develop wrinkle acceptance criteria. As 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; RSPA will discuss this issue further with the ASME B31.8 committee during the next meeting. Accordingly, Safety Recommendation P-02-1 is classified "Open—Acceptable Response," pending completion of the ASME standards revisions.

P-02-2

Require pipeline owners and operators to provide follow-up telephone updates to the National Response Center when they discover that the information they initially reported contains significant errors or when they identify significant new information directly related to the reporting criteria.

Because RSPA issued Advisory Bulletin (ADB-02-04), which clarifies the requirements of Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 191.5, 193.2001, and 195.52, Safety Recommendation P-

02-2 was classified “Closed—Acceptable Action” on December 2, 2002. The ADB addresses required notifications to the National Response Center (NRC) and explains that, in addition to the initial reporting of an incident, pipeline owners and operators must provide follow-up telephone updates to the NRC when they discover that the information they initially reported contains significant errors or when they identify significant new information directly related to the reporting criteria.

Thank you for your prompt action on Safety Recommendation P-02-2. We look forward to receiving further information on the completion of Safety Recommendation P-02-1.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

John A. Hammerschmidt
Acting Chairman

cc: Ms. Nancy DiModica, Safety and Health Team
Office of Transportation Policy Development