



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

October 4, 2023

Mr. Brad Bean
Senior Partner and Managing Member
B3PE LLC
419 East Columbia Street
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907

Dear Mr. Bean:

In a letter to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) dated March 10, 2023, you requested an interpretation of the Federal pipeline safety regulations in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 192 with respect to the § 192.3 definition of “transmission line.”

You stated that the paragraph (2) definition of a “transmission line” was revised by the Amendment 192-132 of the August 24, 2022, final rule (87 Fed. Reg. 52267), from “(2) Operates at a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS; or” to “(2) Has an MAOP of 20 percent or more of SMYS;”

You stated that the maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) is a measure of pressure and specified minimum yield strength (SMYS) is a measure of stress, and the new wording of “transmission line” therefore evaluates a pressure value against a stress value while the original wording made it clear that the evaluation criteria was between two stress values. You believe the new wording meant to evaluate an MAOP that would produce a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS, such that two stress values would be compared in defining a “transmission line” under § 192.3. You suggested if PHMSA meant to indicate the latter (i.e., an MAOP that would produce a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS) in the new wording of “transmission line” that PHMSA should amend the paragraph (2) definition of “transmission line” to clearly state the intended evaluation criteria. You requested confirmation that the August 24, 2022, final rule regulatory language intended operators to evaluate if the hoop stress produced by the MAOP is equal to or greater than 20 percent of SMYS. The relevant regulatory language is reprinted below.

§ 192.3 Definitions.

Transmission line means a pipeline or connected series of pipelines, other than a gathering line that:

(1)

(2) Has an MAOP of 20 percent or more of SMYS;

Response: The August 24, 2022, final rule regulatory language intended operators to evaluate if the hoop stress produced by the MAOP is equal to or greater than 20 percent of SMYS; therefore, a pipeline with an MAOP that produces a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS would be a transmission line under paragraph (2) of 49 CFR § 192.3.

PHMSA will consider clarifying the § 192.3 regulatory definition of “transmission line” in a future rulemaking.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Tewabe Asebe at 202-366-5523.

Sincerely,

John A. Gale
Director, Office of Standards
and Rulemaking



March 10, 2023

Mr. Shane Kelley
Director, Standards and Rulemaking Division
U.S. DOT/PHMSA (PHH-10)
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE East Building, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Request For Formal Interpretation 49 CFR 192.3 “Transmission line” Definition

The definition of a “Transmission line” was revised by Amendment 192-132 August 24, 2022. Paragraph (2) of the definition previously read,

“(2) operates at a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS; or”

The revised Paragraph (2) reads,

“(2) Has an MAOP of 20 percent or more of SMYS;”

As you may be aware, MAOP is a measure of pressure, SMYS is a measure of stress. The original wording made it clear that the evaluation criteria was between two stress values. The new wording (as written) is evaluating a pressure value against a stress value. With this wording the evaluation would be calculated as:

$$\text{MAOP} / \text{SMYS} \times 100 \qquad \text{Equation 1}$$

I suspect that the new wording was intended to say something like “Has an MAOP that would produce a hoop stress of 20 percent or more of SMYS”. With this wording the evaluation would be calculated as:

$$\text{Hoop Stress At MAOP} / \text{SMYS} \times 100 \qquad \text{Equation 2}$$

Please confirm whether the 20 percent evaluation criteria is to be calculated using Equation 1 or Equation 2. If Equation 2 is correct, I would suggest amending the definition to clearly state the intended evaluation criteria.

Please advise. Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Bean'.

Brad Bean
Senior Partner/Managing Member