DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

49 CFR Parts 192 and 195

[Docket PS-66; Notice 2]

Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline Transportation of Hazardous Liquids by Pipeline; Placing Longitudinal Weld Seams in Upper Half of Pipe

AGENCY: Materials Transportation Bureau (MTB), Research and Special Programs Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Withdrawal of Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM).

SUMMARY: An ANPRM sought information concerning the need for a new safety standard that would require placement of the longitudinal weld seams in the upper half of newly constructed pipelines as a means to reduce the number of accidents caused by internal corrosion.

The comments to the ANPRM, recommendations by members of advisory committees for gas and liquid pipelines, and a review of accident reports submitted to MTB indicate that the location of the weld seam is not expected to be a factor in corrosion caused accidents that might occur on newly constructed pipelines. Consequently, the ANPRM is withdrawn.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank Robinson, 202-426-2392.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MTB issued an ANPRM (45 FR 20142, March 27, 1980) seeking information concerning a recommendation (72-P-9) by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to locate the longitudinal weld seam in the upper half of the pipe during pipeline construction to avoid the potential for internal corrosion occurring at the weld seam or heat affected zone. According to the NTSB, internal corrosion on the bottom of the pipe will weaken an insufficiently bonded longitudinal seam when it also is located on the bottom of the pipe and the pipe will fail at such locations. This condition prevails in pipelines transporting gas or hazardous liquids according to NTSB

The ANPRM sought information necessary to define the safety problem addressed by the recommendation, to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendation, and to weigh the technical and economic practicability of the recommendation. In addition to publishing the ANPRM, the MTB brought the recommendation before the Technical Pipeline Safety Standards Committee (TPSSC) for gas pipelines on December 9, 1980, and the Technical Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Standards Committee (THLPSSC) on December 17, 1981, in order to gain the views of committee members as well as views of the public.

Other than the NTSB, the 40 commenters responding to the ANPRM did not support adoption of a new safety standard to place the longitudinal seam in the uper half of the pipe for gas transmission or distribution pipelines or for hazardous liquid pipelines. These commenters argued that industry experience indicates that failures are seldom if at all caused by internal corrosion in the longitudinal seam or heat affected zone. While not agreeing with NTSB that corrosion in the longitudinal weld seam or heat affected zone is a potential problem, these commenters argued that current welding technology together with precise quality control of the weld and improved control of pipe metal chemistry prevents the occurrence of weld seams which are insufficiently bonded.

During the TPSSC meeting on December 9, 1980, the NTSB reiterated its position in favor of adopting the rule. The committee members, however, expressed the view that (1) the weld seam or heat affected zone is not more subject to internal corrosion than the body of the pipe, and (2) experience of the committee members with liquid and gas pipelines does not indicate that internal corrosion in the weld seam or heat affected zone is a serious safety problem. The TPSSC suggested that accident reports submitted to MTB be examined to determine whether a serious safety problem is indicated by the data.

The MTB accident records were surveyed to determine the incidence of accidents that might be attributable to internal corrosion in the longitudinal weld seam or heat affected zone. None of the 3,144 liquid pipeline accidents reported to date involved internal corrosion in the longitudinal seam other than the Phillips Pipe Line Company December 9, 1970, accident noted in the ANPRM.

Only six accidents reporting internal corrosion in the longitudinal seam were found in the 12,782 gas transmission and distribution pipeline accidents to date. All six of these accidents were on the same transmission pipeline within a few miles of each other which indicates a local problem rather than a problem throughout the industry. Further, four of these six accidents occurred during hydrostatic test and thus were not failures in the ordinary sense. Additionally, the accident data did not include the location of the longitudinal seam and, therefore, placement of the longitudinal seam cannot be correlated with those remaining two failures which might indicate the existence of a safety problem.

The majority of the members of the THLPSSC, after reviewing the ANPRM, the comments submitted in response to the ANPRM, and the MTB accident records, favored withdrawing the ANPRM for lack of information indicating the existence of a serious safety problem.

In view of the negative comments in response to the ANPRM, the lack of support for the proposal by the TPSSC and the THLPSSC, and the lack of statistical data in the accident reports indicating the existence of a serious safety problem, the MTB does not believe that the placement of the longitudinal weld seam poses a serious safety problem. While the Phillips accident and the six accidents in gas pipelines involved corrosion in the weld seam, the MTB believes that (1) these were isolated cases and do not represent a general, widespread condition, and (2) the type of weld defect that might have caused these failures is unlikely to recur on newly constructed pipelines due to the application of modern manufacturing techniques. Therefore, the MTB hereby withdraws the ANPRM concerning placement of the longitudinal weld seam in the upper half of pipe, as published at 45 FR 20142, March 27, 1980.

(49 U.S.C. 1672; U.S.C. 2001; 49 CFR 1.53(a), Appendix A of Part 1 and Appendix A of Part 106)

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Melvin A. Judah

Acting Associate Director for Pipeline Safety Regulation Materials Transportation Bureau.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

Review of the Status; U.S. Breeding Population of the Wood Stork

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of status review.

SUMMARY: The Service is reviewing the status of the U.S. breeding population of the wood stork (*Mycteria americana*) to