

March 7, 1975

Mr. John R. Thistlethwaite, Chairman
Opelousas City Planning Commission
705 South Court Street
Opelousas, LA 70570

Dear Mr. Thistlethwaite:

Thank you for your recent letter asking how we might assist the Opelousas City Planning Commission respecting its review of a proposed subdivision overlying a 24-inch, 850 psi Florida Gas Pipeline and a 4-inch, 250 psi Exxon gas pipeline.

Under the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 (49 USC 1671 et seq.), this office administers Federal safety standards and reporting requirements applicable to gas pipeline facilities and the transportation of gas in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce. These regulations are contained in Parts 191 and 192 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, a copy of which is enclosed.

This office monitors gas pipeline facilities on a periodic basis to determine whether the facilities are in compliance with the safety standards. In Louisiana, the Department of Conservation is authorized under Section 5(b) of the Act to monitor facilities which are not under the jurisdiction of the Federal Power Commission. We are not staffed, however, to routinely examine pipelines upon request in situations such as yours, unless a particular hazard to the public or violation of the safety standards is believed to exist.

In this regard, the Federal safety standards do not prohibit the transportation of gas in high pressure pipelines in subdivisions or under houses. In fact, the Act provides that we may not prescribe the location or routing of a pipeline. Alternatively, the safety standards are written to vary in stringency depending on the proximity of a pipeline to populated areas. You should also note that in the case of significant population changes surrounding certain gas pipelines, sections 192.609 and 192.611 require pipeline operators to take specific remedial actions if necessary under the circumstances.

We believe that the proposed use of the pipeline operator's right-of-way for residential development is a matter for agreement between the operator, the landowner, and the developer, subject to any State or local controls.

We trust this adequately responds to your inquiry.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Caldwell
Director
Office of Pipeline Safety

Enclosure