

underestimate, of the anticipated supply and cost impacts.

Baseline Assessment Time Frame. The decision on a baseline assessment interval must reflect the need to expedite pipeline assessment without dramatically impacting gas availability and price. The INGAA/EEA analysis supports the conclusion that a ten-year baseline assessment requirement is consistent with managing supply and cost impacts resulting from the new assessment requirements. The predicted impact on consumer energy cost associated with this baseline time frame is \$13.1 billion. While this is a very large cost, it represents a small percentage impact on total gas costs over the time period of the analysis. RSPA has concluded that a ten-year baseline assessment period, with 50% of covered segments being assessed within five years, will allow the impact on gas supply and cost to be adequately managed by the operators.

Mapping

We stated in the proposed rule on high consequence areas (67 FR 1108; January 9, 2002), that RSPA/OPS is creating the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS), a database that contains the locations and selected attributes of natural gas transmission lines and hazardous liquid trunk lines and liquified natural gas facilities operating in the United States.

RSPA/OPS will require operators to provide their pipeline data by a separate rulemaking on mapping. Submission of this information has been voluntary in the past. At present, RSPA/OPS has received data on pipe locations for 90% of liquid pipelines but only 52% of gas pipelines. Currently, RSPA/OPS has no data on areas of higher population density (Class 3 and 4 locations) associated with gas pipelines. Present gas pipeline regulations are structured to provide increasing levels of protections, consistent with predetermined thresholds. Accordingly, gas pipeline operators are required to monitor data on the number of dwellings within 660 feet of their pipelines to either lower operating pressure or to replace the pipe with one having greater wall thickness or strength as the number of dwellings increases above predefined threshold. RSPA/OPS therefore believes that operators have excellent data on population and places where people congregate near their pipelines.

Maps incorporating these data would be useful not only to pipeline operators, but also to federal and state inspectors and for local officials and community needs. RSPA/OPS intends to use

operator-supplied information to map the high consequence areas that it defines in a gas integrity management rule, similar to how it is mapping these areas for the liquid operators. A separate rulemaking on mapping will address this issue.

Treatment of Storage Fields

Storage fields have provided a source of pipeline integrity problems for decades. RSPA/OPS asked for information to help identify the cause of and prevent piping-related failures associated with storage fields that could affect high consequence areas. INGAA stated that those in high consequence areas should be treated in the same way as natural gas transmission pipelines.

The proposed rule requirements will include pipelines within the storage fields because under § 192.3(c) such pipelines are defined as transmission lines.

The Proposed Rule

RSPA/OPS is proposing a modification to section 192.761 and addition of a new section 192.763 to subpart M: High Consequences Area Definitions and Integrity Management Programs. The § 192.761 titled "Definitions" defined "high consequence areas" in a recently issued final rule (67 FR 50824; August 6, 2002); and proposed a new section 192.763 "Pipeline Integrity Management in High Consequence Areas" is described in this rule.

High Consequence Area Definitions—§ 192.761

The definition of high consequence areas recently published in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 50824; August 6, 2002) includes: (a) Current Class 3 locations; (b) current Class 4 locations; (c) an area that extends 300 feet from the centerline of the pipeline to the identified site for a pipeline not more than 12 inches in diameter and having a maximum operating pressure lower than 1200 psig; (d) an area of 1000 feet from the centerline of the pipeline to the identified site for a pipeline greater than 30 inches in diameter operating at a pressure greater than 1000 psig; (e) an area that extends 660 feet from the centerline of the pipeline to the identified site for all other pipelines. The areas of 300, 660 and 1000 feet are corridors that have been determined based on generalized estimates of potential rupture consequences. An identified site is defined as a building or outside area that can be identified by one of several means and that houses people who are difficult to evacuate or have impaired mobility (e.g., hospital,

church, school, prisons, day care facility); or where there is evidence that 20 or more people congregate at least 50 days in a year (e.g. beach, camping ground, religious facility). The full text of the HCA definition can be reviewed in the **Federal Register** document referenced above.

An identified site can be identified by one of several means listed in the rule: it is visibly marked, it is licensed or registered, it is on a list or map maintained by or available from a Federal, State or local agency or a publicly or commercially available database or it is known by public officials. RSPA/OPS is inviting comment on whether we should use the term public safety officials (e.g. Police, Fire department) and/or emergency response officials instead of public officials. Currently, pipeline operators are required to conduct liaison activities with public safety officials or emergency safety officials. We would like comment on whether the term "public safety officials or emergency response official" will cover the persons having the relevant information about these identified sites.

On September 5, 2002, the American Gas Association (AGA), the American Public Gas Association (APGA), the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America (INGAA), and the New York Gas Group (NYGAS) filed a petition for the reconsideration of the final rule on the definition of HCAs for gas transmission pipelines (67 FR 50835; August 8, 2002). This petition is in the docket. The petition raised the following issues.

(1) The splitting of the gas integrity rule into two rulemakings—the definition and the integrity requirements—causes confusion, particularly, since the Potential Impact Zone concept was not included in the definition.

(2) The HCA definition should clarify that it applies to those gas transmission pipelines that have the potential to impact high population density areas and does not apply to distribution pipelines.

(3) The identified site component (buildings and outside areas) is overly broad. The definition should instead use the language in 192.5.

RSPA/OPS believes issuance of this proposed rule will alleviate most of the concerns raised in the petition. As previously discussed, the HCA rule only defines general areas of high consequence. It includes corridors (lateral distances of 300, 660, and 1000 feet), but not axial distances along the pipeline. The axial distances can only be determined by analysis of potential