

has been prepared. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the scoping meetings, and the formal public hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing on the draft EIS.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments, and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or DelDOT at the addressed provided above:

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued by: August 18, 2003.

Thomas D. Myers,

Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Dover, Delaware.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

Pipeline Safety: Pipeline Industry Implementation of Effective Public Awareness Programs

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of advisory bulletin.

SUMMARY: RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is issuing this advisory bulletin to owners and operators of hazardous liquid pipelines, gas transmission pipelines, gas distribution pipelines, and crude oil and gas gathering pipeline systems regulated under 49 CFR parts 192 and 195. The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (PSIA) requires that each owner or operator of a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline facility implement a continuing public education program. By December 17, 2003, each owner or operator must review its existing public education program for effectiveness and modify the program as necessary. RSPA/OPS is asking that each operator complete a self-assessment of its public education program against the guidelines established in the recently-issued consensus standard, American Petroleum Institute's API RP 1162, "Public Awareness Programs for

Pipeline Operators," before December 17, 2003, to demonstrate compliance with the PSIA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Wiese, (202)366-2036; or by e-mail, jeff.wiese@rspa.dot.gov. This document can be viewed at the OPS home page at <http://ops.dot.gov>. General information about the RSPA/OPS programs may be obtained by accessing RSPA's home page at <http://RSPA.dot.gov>.

I. Advisory Bulletin (ADB-03-04)

To: Owners and Operators of Hazardous Liquid Pipelines, Gas Transmission Pipelines, Gas Distribution Pipeline Systems, and Crude Oil and Gas Gathering Pipeline Systems.

Subject: Pipeline Industry Implementation of Effective Public Awareness Programs.

Purpose: To advise owners and operators of hazardous liquid, gas transmission, gas distribution, and crude oil and gas gathering pipeline systems of the statutory requirement to review and maintain effective public education programs and to evaluate programs for effectiveness.

Advisory: The (PSIA) requires that each owner or operator of a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline facility must carry out a continuing public education program. By December 17, 2003, each owner or operator must review its existing public education program for effectiveness and modify the program as necessary. RSPA/OPS is asking each operator to complete a self-assessment of its public education program against the guidelines established in the recently-issued, industry consensus standard, API RP 1162, "Public Awareness Programs for Pipeline Operators." To assist in this process, RSPA/OPS is developing a self-assessment system that operators can access and complete over the Internet. The self-assessment will help operators identify gaps in their public education programs and improvements needed to align their programs with the requirements of API RP 1162. In September 2003, RSPA/OPS, the National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives, and the pipeline industry are cosponsoring two public workshops to help operators understand the requirements of the law and the use of the self-assessment system. Operators should submit their self-assessments to RSPA/OPS no later than December 17, 2003.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

II. Background

The Federal pipeline safety regulations at 49 CFR parts 192 and 195 require operators of gas and hazardous liquid pipelines to establish continuing educational programs to enable customers, the public, government organizations, and persons engaged in excavation-related activities to recognize a pipeline emergency for the purpose of reporting it to the operator or the appropriate public officials. The regulations also require that operators implement written programs to prevent pipeline damage from excavation activities and establish public awareness liaison with emergency officials. Accordingly, pipeline operators have previously conducted public awareness programs with the affected public, emergency responders, and excavators along their routes.

The PSIA requires that each owner or operator of a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline facility must carry out a continuing program to educate the public on the use of a one-call notification system prior to excavation and other damage prevention activities, the possible hazards associated with unintended releases from the pipeline facility, the physical indications that such a release may have occurred, what steps should be taken for public safety in the event of a pipeline release, and how to report such an event.

The PSIA requires that by December 17, 2003 (not later than 12 months after the date of its enactment), each owner or operator of a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline facility must review its existing public education program for effectiveness and modify the program as necessary. The completed program must include activities to advise affected municipalities, school districts, businesses, and residents of pipeline facility locations. The completed program must be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation or, in the case of an intrastate pipeline facility operator, the appropriate State agency, and shall be periodically reviewed by the Secretary or, in the case of an intrastate pipeline facility operator, the appropriate State agency.

The PSIA also provides that the Secretary of Transportation may issue standards prescribing the elements of an effective public education program. The Secretary may also develop material for use in the program.

In recognition of the importance of effective public awareness programs, outstanding recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board and anticipated legislative action in this regard, an industry task force developed