

be available for inspection and copying at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. An electronic version of this document and all documents entered into this docket is available on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Michael Hokana, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, MAR-830 Room 7201, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone 202-366-0760.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** As described by the applicant the intended service of the vessel VERITAS is:

*Intended Use:* "Charter cruises."

*Geographic Region:* "U.S. East Coastal Waters and the Caribbean."

Dated: December 23, 2003.

By order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary, Maritime Administration.

[FR Doc. 03-32095 Filed 12-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-81-P

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Research and Special Programs Administration**

[Docket No. RSPA-98-4957]

**Request for Public Comments and OMB Approval of Existing Information Collection**

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

**SUMMARY:** As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Research and Special Programs Administration, Office of Pipeline Safety published its intention to revise forms RSPA F 7100.1, Incident Report for Gas Distribution Systems, and Form RSPA F 7100.1-1, Annual Report for Gas Distribution Systems, (68 FR 33759, June 5, 2003). Several operators, two trade associations representing natural gas distribution pipeline operators, one state utility commission, and one individual provided comments. The purpose of this additional notice is to provide the public an additional 30 days to comment on the proposed revisions to the natural gas distribution incident and annual reporting forms, including the form instructions.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by January 30, 2004, to be assured of consideration.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Shauna Turnbull by telephone at (202) 366-3731, by fax at (202) 366-4566, by e-mail at [shauna.turnbull@rspa.dot.gov](mailto:shauna.turnbull@rspa.dot.gov),

or by mail at the DOT/RSPA Office of Pipeline Safety, DPS-13, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the proposed information collection and the revised forms and instructions can be viewed in this docket at <http://dms.dot.gov>. You may also visit the Dockets Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590-0001. Comments should identify the docket number of this notice, RSPA-98-4957, and can be mailed directly to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 726 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20503, ATTN: Desk Officer for Department of Transportation (DOT).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Filing Information**

The Dockets facility is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. You should submit an original and one copy of a comment. If you wish to receive confirmation of receipt of your comments, you must include a stamped, self-addressed postcard. To file written comments electronically, after logging onto <http://dms.dot.gov>, click on "Electronic Submission." You can read comments and other material in the docket at: <http://dms.dot.gov>. General information about our pipeline safety program is available at: <http://ops.dot.gov>.

**Background**

Operators of pipeline systems subject to the Research and Special Programs Administration/Office of Pipeline Safety (RSPA/OPS) natural gas distribution systems pipeline safety regulations are required to report annually, and for each reportable incident, certain information about those systems. RSPA/OPS uses this information to compile a national pipeline inventory, to identify and determine the scope of safety problems, and to target inspections. The information provides the basis for more efficient and meaningful analyses of RSPA/OPS gas distribution pipeline incident and annual data.

RSPA/OPS uses pipeline incident and annual data to identify safety issues and to target risk-based inspections. The data are collected from incidents reported by operators on RSPA Form F 7100.1, Incident Report—Gas Distribution Pipelines. Operators are required to file an incident report form within thirty days after a reportable incident occurs. Annual information is collected from operators reporting on

RSPA Form F 7100.1-1, Annual Report "Gas Distribution Pipelines. Operators are required to file annual report forms with RSPA/OPS by March 15th of the preceding calendar year.

RSPA/OPS published a notice in the **Federal Register** on June 5, 2003 (68 FR 33759) inviting comments on proposed revisions to the gas distribution pipeline operator incident and annual reports and associated instructions. These revisions require operators to submit information necessary for the normalization of incident information for safety trend analysis. The proposed changes are intended to make information collection more useful to the public, government agencies, and industry.

**Summary of Comments**

In response to the **Federal Register** notice of June 5, 2003 (68 FR 33759) RSPA/OPS received comments from the American Gas Association (AGA), the American Public Gas Association (APGA), the State of Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Southern Connecticut Gas and the Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation (Connecticut), Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison), Southwest Gas Corporation (Southwest), Atmos Energy Corporation (Atmos), and Mr. John Erikson, Pipeline Safety Consultant (Mr. Erikson). The comments and RSPA/OPS responses are summarized below for the proposed incident and annual report forms and instructions.

*Incident Report Form RSPA F 7100.1*

**Operator Time Burden**

AGA expects that, at least for the first year, the operator burden for completing the forms will exceed the estimated 12 hour completion time and cost burden. Gas distribution pipeline operators usually computerize the collection of incident and annual report form data.

Approximately five percent of the workforce may have to be trained to manage the new data format. One operator estimated that \$40,000 would be spent to reprogram the data systems that collect, record, validate, retrieve, and process this information. APGA states that asking for extraneous information will increase compliance costs.

RSPA/OPS Response: RSPA/OPS agrees with the comment that the amount of time to complete the forms was underestimated in the notice. We have considered the extra impact of computerization and the cost of increased training, and have doubled the amount of estimated time to