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U.S. Department of Transportation Seeks Comment on Possible New Gas Pipeline Safety Measures

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) today announced that it is seeking information on whether or not to propose new safety requirements for gas transmission pipelines. In April, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood launched a national pipeline safety initiative to prevent potentially catastrophic incidents. The advanced noticed of proposed rulemaking process initiated today follows on Secretary LaHood’s call to action and seeks public comment on a range of pipeline safety issues.

“The safety of the American people is my top priority,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “I am committed to working with pipeline operators, utilities, local governments and members of the public to ensure our nation’s pipeline infrastructure is safe and well-maintained.”

This Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) asks the public to comment on whether certain regulatory exemptions for pipelines constructed before 1970 should be eliminated and whether integrity management requirements for pipelines should be strengthened and broadened.

“Incidents with significant consequences continue to occur on gas transmission pipelines, and this action will help us determine whether new requirements are needed to increase safety,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman.

PHMSA is also considering whether to propose requirements reducing the operating pressure for some pipelines that were built before 1970 and were previously exempt from other requirements. Other matters under consideration include revising requirements on valves for new or existing pipelines, whether requirements for corrosion control of steel pipelines should be strengthened, and whether new regulations are needed to govern the safety of gathering lines and underground gas storage facilities.

In total, PHMSA is seeking public comment on 14 specific topics related to pipeline integrity management and pipeline system integrity. Integrity management programs combine periodic inspection and testing of a pipeline's condition with continuous management processes to collect, integrate, analyze, and apply information about possible risks.

The public comment period for this notice ends 60 days after the date of publication in the *Federal Register*. The ANPRM is available on the PHMSA website at www.phmsa.dot.gov.

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