

OCT 28 1992

Mr. Douglas B. Ham  
Acting Administrator  
Research and Special Programs  
Administration  
400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Ham:

Thank you for your September 3, 1992, response to the National Transportation Safety Board's Safety Recommendation P-91-12. The recommendation was issued to the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) as a result of the Board's investigation of the natural gas fire and explosion in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on August 29, 1990. The recommendation asked the RSPA to require each gas operator to implement a program, based on factors such as age, pipe diameter, operating pressure, soil corrosiveness, existing graphitic damage, leak history, burial depth, and external loading, to identify and replace in a planned, timely manner cast-iron piping systems that may threaten public safety.

The Safety Board appreciates receiving a copy of the Pipeline Safety Alert Notice issued by the RSPA on June 26, 1992, that supplements the RSPA's October 11, 1991, Alert Notice concerning cast-iron pipe. The new Alert Notice emphasizes that each operator is required to have a procedure for continuing surveillance of its pipeline facilities, including cast-iron pipe, to identify problems and take appropriate action concerning failures, leakage history, corrosion, and other unusual operating and maintenance conditions. The Alert Notice also points out that if a segment of pipeline, including a cast-iron segment, is determined to be in unsatisfactory condition but no immediate hazard exists, the operator shall initiate a program to recondition or phase out the segment involved. As a result of the conference between our staffs on January 7, 1992, and the subsequent development of the June 26, 1992, Alert Notice, Safety Recommendation P-91-12 has been classified as "Closed--Acceptable Alternate Action."

Sincerely,  
Original Signed By  
Carl W. Vogt

Carl W. Vogt  
Chairman

cc: Mr. Donald R. Trilling  
Office of Transportation Regulatory Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20590