NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: May 15, 1979

Forwarded to:

Mr. L.D. Santman
Director
Materials Transportation Bureau
Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C.   20590

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

P-79-6

At 12:02 a.m., c.d.t., on August 4, 1978, propane that had vaporized and spread widely from a ruptured 8-inch liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) pipeline owned by the Mid-America Pipeline System (MAPCO) was ignited by an unknown source in a rural area near Donnellson, Iowa. The intense fire killed two persons and critically burned three others; one of the critically burned persons later died. A farmhouse and six outbuildings were destroyed, and two adjacent homes were damaged.[1]

Statistics show that LPG is more hazardous than other petroleum products. Since 1972 the Safety Board's investigations of LPG accidents have resulted in 11 recommendations regarding rulemaking to make regulations for LPG pipelines more stringent.
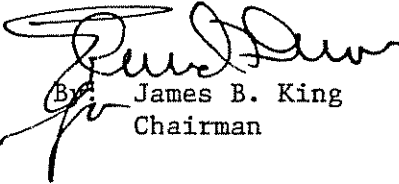
On August 8, 1978, the OPSO issued its first of three Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) about LPG pipelines. The first concerned maintenance, operating, and emergency procedures; the second, issued August 28, 1978, concerned valve types and valve spacing; and the third, issued November 7, 1978, concerned testing LPG pipelines. The OPSO has not yet issued any regulations as a result of the Safety Board's recommendations or of the rulemaking process.

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[1]   For more detailed information read "Pipeline Accident Report--
      Mid-America Pipeline System Liquefied Petroleum Gas Pipeline
      Rupture and Fire, Donnellson, Iowa, August 4, 1978"
      (NTSB-PAR-79-1).

2460-B

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Materials Transportation Bureau of the U.S. Department of Transportation:

Reevaluate all recommendations made by the Safety Board concerning LPG, and expedite those that require rulemaking. (Class II, Priority Action)(P-79-6)

KING, Chairman, DRIVER, Vice Chairman, McADAMS and HOGUE, Members, concurred in this recommendation.

By: James B. King
Chairman