
**DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION**
Materials Transportation Bureau

[Docket No. 79-10W; Notice 2]

**Transportation of Liquids by Pipeline;
Waiver of Compliance With Require-
ment to Inspect Valves for Proper
Functioning at 6-Month Intervals**

The Alyeska Pipeline Service Company petitioned (Petition 79-10W) the Materials Transportation Bureau (MTB) for a waiver to extend the 6-month interval within which main line valves must be inspected for proper functioning under §195.420(b). Alyeska requested that the inspection interval be extended from 6 months to two inspections annually, with intervals not greater than 8 months between inspections. The waiver was sought for all remotely controlled main line valves (RGV) on the entire 800-mile length of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

The Alyeska request stated that the severe weather conditions for much of the year must be considered in all operating and maintenance procedures, and such procedures developed for the region must be designed to minimize hazardous exposure to personnel. As a result, visits to the RGV sites during the winter are performed under emergency conditions only. In order to perform the tests for the function prescribed by §195.420 (b) during favorable weather, Alyeska requested a waiver from compliance with §195.420(b).

Alyeska argued that it is not possible to remotely operate each valve without visiting each RGV site, because the RGV's are remotely controlled in groups, and operating a group of valves would require shutting down pipeline operations.

According to Alyeska, in the history of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, there have been few instances where RGV's have failed to operate and none of these resulted in an unsafe condition.

In view of the above, the MTB published a notice on October 26, 1981 (46 FR 52268) proposing to grant to Alyeska the requested waiver.

Interested persons were invited to comment on the proposed waiver by submitting data, views, or arguments as they desired. Two industry commenters responded to the notice and both commenters recommended granting the pro-

posed waiver arguing that the current 6-month inspection interval as prescribed in §195.402(b), does not allow sufficient flexibility in scheduling the valve inspections.

In consideration of (1) the hazards to operating personnel presented by the winter wather [sic] conditions along the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, (2) lack of opportunity to substitute a remote functional test of the RGV's for an attended functional test, (3) the record of reliability of the RGV's, and (4) the comments received in favor of granting the proposed waiver, the MTB hereby grants Alyeska the requested waiver from compliance with §195.420(b), provided the following requirement is met:

“Alyeska shall inspect two times each calendar year, with intervals between inspections not to exceed 8 months, each main line valve to determine that it is functioning properly.”

(49 U.S.C. 2002; 49 CFR 1.53(a), Appendix A to Part 1 and Appendix A to Part 106)

Issued in Washington, D.C., on June 16, 1982.

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