
**DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION**
**Research and Special Programs
Administration**

[Docket No. P-91-4W; Notice 2]

**Transportation of Natural and Other
Gas by Pipeline; Grant of Waiver;
Northwest Pipeline Corp.**

The Northwest Pipeline Corporation (Northwest) petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR 192.611(c) for its 26-inch main line between mileposts 1393.79 and 1394.57 (0.78 miles) and mileposts 1395.99 and 1396.52 (0.53 miles) in Snohomish County, Washington. Section 192.611(c) requires confirmation or revision of a pipeline's maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) within 18 months of a change in class location (or population density). Northwest determined that, effective October 4, 1990, the class location of the above sections of main line and of a 30-inch loop line, changed from Class Location 2 to Class Location 3. Such class location change determination was made pursuant to a study required by §192.609 due to an increase in population density. Absent a waiver, Northwest would be required, on April 4, 1992, to either (1) reduce MAOP on the 26-inch main line from 674 psig to 562 psig, or (2) retest the line for operation at 674 psig (60 percent of the specified minimum yield of the pipe) pursuant to §192.611(a)(1). Northwest seeks a waiver of this requirement for a 6-month period ending September 30, 1992. No waiver is required for the 30-inch loop line because it meets Class Location 3 standards.

The waiver would allow Northwest to maintain throughput pending requalification by hydrostatic testing of a 46.25 mile portion of the system. Northwest filed a certificate application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on December 31, 1990, seeking approval to expand and upgrade certain existing facilities (Docket No. CP91-780-000, 002). Northwest estimates construction and requalification of the pipeline should be complete by September 30, 1992, assuming timely receipt of FERC approval.

In response to the petition, and the justification contained therein, RSPA issued a Notice of Petition for Waiver

inviting interested parties to comment (Notice 1) (57 FR 6884; February 28, 1992). In that notice, RSPA explained why granting a waiver from 49 CFR 192.611(c) for a 6-month period to allow the operator sufficient time to expand and upgrade the pipeline would not affect safety.

Comments were received from two respondents. Each endorsed the petition and recommended granting the waiver. However, one respondent recommended granting the waiver. However, one respondent recommended that patrols of the two sections of the pipeline requiring waiver be done daily for the duration of the waiver. In the petition, Northwest said the pipelines are patrolled weekly. In contrast, §192.705 allows intervals between patrols of as long as 72 months for transmission lines in class 3 locations. The respondent did not provide justification for daily patrols. Further, since Northwest has not reported any leaks or failures or other adverse factors on the sections requiring waiver, we believe daily patrols are not needed for safety.

In accordance with the foregoing, RSPA, by this order, finds that compliance with §192.611(c) is unnecessary for the reasons stated in the Notice of Petition for Waiver (57 FR 6884; February 28, 1992), and that the requested waiver would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety. Accordingly, Northwest Pipeline Corporation's petition for waiver from compliance with §192.611(c) is granted for the period beginning April 4, 1992 and ending September 30, 1992.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 6, 1992.

George W. Tenley, Jr.,
Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

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