



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

APR 07 2015

Mr. Royce Ramsey
Vice President of Operations
Northern Natural Gas Company
1111 South 103rd Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68124

**Ref: PHMSA-RSPA-2005-20323
RSPA-2005-20323**

Special Permit Renewal from April 15, 2015 to April 15, 2020

Dear Mr. Ramsey:

By letter dated August 14, 2014, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) notified Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) that special permit PHMSA-RSPA-2005-20323, would expire on April 15, 2015, unless renewed. By letter dated October 3, 2014, and supplemented by additional correspondence, Northern applied for the renewal of the special permit, RSPA-2005-20323, and provided operational documents to justify the special permit renewal. On February 4, 2015, PHMSA published a Federal Register notice announcing the Special Permit renewal request from Northern (80 FR 6174).

The special permit segments are located on the Northern 2³/₈-inch Rippey branch line (IAB64601) located in Greene County, Iowa, and the Northern 4¹/₂-inch La Crescent branch line (MNB73701) located in Houston County, Minnesota. This special permit allows for the non-odorization of natural gas in a pipeline that is normally required to be odorized in accordance with 49 CFR § 192.625(b)(1).

The special permit renewal request letter and all other pertinent documents are available for review in Docket No. PHMSA-RSPA-2005-20323, in the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) located at www.regulations.gov.

PHMSA reviewed all operational, maintenance, and environmental assessment data submitted by Northern for the 2³/₈-inch Rippey branch line (IAB64601) and the 4¹/₂-inch La Crescent branch line (MNB73701) special permit. PHMSA finds that Northern continues to meet the terms of the special permit and there has been no material change in conditions. PHMSA received one comment regarding this special permit renewal request. The commenter indicated that she did not believe the special permit should be given in this instance, and that waivers only benefit those seeking profit and not the public. The commenter did not provide any safety concern or technical basis for the objection. As indicated below, PHMSA reviewed the special permit renewal request and has determined that approval of the renewal will not reduce public safety.

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Based on the information provided by Northern, PHMSA has determined that renewal of the special permit would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety.

Accordingly, by this Order, and as described in the original special permit, PHMSA grants Northern Natural Gas Company a special permit renewal for PHMSA-RSPA-2005-20323, to operate for the Northern 2³/₈-inch Rippey branch line (IAB64601) located in Greene County, Iowa, and the Northern 4¹/₂-inch La Crescent branch line (MNB73701) located in Houston County, Minnesota, from April 15, 2015, through April 15, 2020. This special permit renewal Order waives compliance with 49 CFR § 192.625(b)(1) for the Northern 2³/₈-inch Rippey branch line (IAB64601) and the 4¹/₂-inch La Crescent branch line (MNB73701).

My staff would be pleased to discuss this special permit or any other regulatory matter with you. Mr. John Gale, Director, Office of Standards and Rulemaking, may be contacted at 202-366-0434 on regulatory matters, Mr. Ken Lee, Director, Engineering and Research Division, may be contacted at 202-366-2694 on technical matters, and Mr. Allan Beshore, Director, OPS, Central Region, may be contacted at 816-329-3811, for operational matters specific to this special permit renewal.

Sincerely,


for: Jeffrey D. Wiese

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety

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April 15, 2015, through April 15, 2020
2³/₈-inch Rippey branch line (IAB64601) and 4¹/₂-inch La Crescent branch line
(MNB73701)**