
**DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION**

**Research and Special Programs
Administration**

[Docket No. P-87-7W; Notice 2]

**Transportation of Hazardous Liquids
By Pipeline; Grant of Waiver, Exxon
Pipeline Co.**

The Exxon Pipeline Company (Exxon) petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with the hydrostatic test requirements of 49 CFR 195.302 and the record retention requirements of 49 CFR 195.310. The petition pertains to two tie-in segments (totaling 80-feet) in an 18.39 mile pipeline in Harris County, Texas. The 8-inch pipeline transports liquid ethylene, a highly volatile liquid (HVL), between the Shell Deer Park Plant, located south of the Houston Ship Channel, and the Exxon Mont Belvieu Plant, located North of the Houston Ship Channel. Construction of the pipeline was completed in 1969; it was placed in HVL service that same year, and is operated as an interstate pipeline connected to an out-of-state system. The pipeline is owned by Exxon, leased by Shell Chemical Company and operated by Shell Pipe Line Corporation.

In 1987, Exxon discovered that the hydrostatic test records required by §195.310 were available for all but 0.08 percent of the 18.39 mile pipeline. Records for the 53-foot and 27-foot tie-ins, located just north and south of the Houston Ship Channel, could not be located. Subsequently, Exxon petitioned RSPA for a waiver of the two short tie-in segments from the hydrostatic test and records retention requirements of §§195.302 and 195.310.

Accompanying Exxon's petition for waiver was information to support their position that granting a waiver would be in the best interest of pipeline safety. That information, presented in more detail in the RSPA response to Exxon's petition [Notice 1][56 FR 46461; September 12, 1991], is summarized as:

1. The two segments are to continue operating at low hoop stress.
2. There are no indications of internal or external corrosion in the two segments.
3. The two segments are not near homes or occupied buildings.

4. No known failures have occurred in the two segments.

5. There is a strong probability that the two segments were properly pretested and that those test records cannot be located.

In response to the petition, and the justification contained therein, RSPA stated in Notice 1 (above) that it accepted the argument that the two segments were properly hydrostatically tested and found no need to grant the requested waiver from the hydrostatic testing requirements of §192.302. Instead RSPA proposed to grant a waiver from compliance with the record retention requirements of 195.310.

A supporting letter was received from the operator of the 8-inch pipeline at the time of submission of Exxon's request for waiver. Also, RSPA received only one response to Notice 1. That respondent, a gas pipeline company in Houston, Texas, agreed with the RSPA assessment and the proposed granting of the waiver.

In accordance with the foregoing, RSPA, by this order, finds that Exxon's compliance with §195.310, for the two tie-ins, is unnecessary for the reasons stated in the Notice of Petition for Waiver [Notice 1][56 FR 46461; September 12, 1991], and that the requested waiver would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety. Accordingly, the Exxon Pipeline Company's petition for waiver from compliance with §195.310 for the two short tie-in segments is granted.

Authority: 49 App. U.S.C. 2002; and 49 CFR 1.53.

Issued in Washington, DC on September 28, 1992.

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

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