



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

AUG - 9 2007

The Honorable Mark V. Rosenker
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Rosenker:

This letter is an initial response to your letter of April 25, 2007 concerning Safety Recommendations R-07-4 and R-07-5. These recommendations were issued following the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) investigation of a rail incident on July 10, 2005, in Anding, Mississippi. In the incident, the collision resulted in the derailment of 6 locomotives and 17 rail cars. Approximately 15,000 gallons of diesel fuel were released from the locomotives and resulted in a fire that burned for 15 hours and resulted in the deaths of four train crewmembers. The recommendations state:

R-07-4

With the assistance of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), require that railroads immediately provide to emergency responders accurate, real-time information regarding the identity and location of all hazardous materials on a train.

R-07-5

Require and verify that States and their communities that receive funds through the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness grant program conduct training exercises and drills with the joint participation of railroads and other transporters of hazardous materials operating within their jurisdictions as a means of evaluating State, regional, and local emergency hazardous materials response plans.

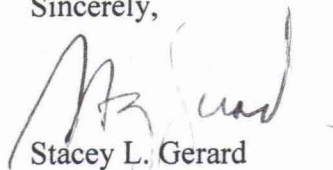
We share your view that effective emergency response depends on thorough planning and training in advance of an incident and accurate, real-time information during an incident. We are currently evaluating the emergency response issues discussed in your letter and federal, state, and local government and industry programs intended to address those issues. We are considering alternative strategies for enhancing emergency response planning and training efforts, including more targeted use of the HMEP grant program funds. We are also examining ways to improve the accuracy of information available to emergency responders at the scene of an accident and the time necessary to provide such information. Once this evaluation is

complete, we will provide you with a detailed response to the recommendations and our plans for addressing the issues you have highlighted.

We request that you classify recommendation R-07-4 and R-07-5 as "Open – Acceptable Action." We thank you for consideration of our request.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-4433.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacey L. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and "G".

Stacey L. Gerard
Assistant Administrator/Chief Safety Officer