

meetings have been announced in the **Federal Register** at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

II. The Contract

The Battelle contract is a research and development contract to evaluate and develop in-line inspection technologies for detecting mechanical damage and cracking, such as stress-corrosion cracking (SCC), in natural gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Third-party mechanical damage is one of the largest causes of pipeline failure, but existing in-line inspection tools cannot always detect or accurately characterize the severity of some types of third-party damage that can threaten pipeline integrity. Although SCC is not very common on pipelines, it usually appears in high-stressed, low-population-density areas and only when a limited set of environmental conditions are met. Several attempts have been made to develop an in-line inspection tool for SCC, but there is no commercially successful tool on the market.

Under the contract, Battelle is evaluating and advancing magnetic flux leakage (MFL) inspection technology for detecting mechanical damage and two electromagnetic technologies for detecting SCC. The focus is on MFL for mechanical damage because experience shows MFL can characterize some types of mechanical damage and can be successfully used for metal-loss corrosion under a wide variety of conditions. The focus for SCC is on electromagnetic technologies that can be used in conjunction with, or as a modification to, MFL tools. The technologies to be evaluated take advantage of the MFL magnetizer either by enhancing signals or using electrical currents that are generated by the passage of an inspection tool through a pipeline.

The contract includes three major tasks. Task 1 evaluated existing MFL signal generation and analysis methods and established a baseline from which today's tools can be evaluated and tomorrow's advances measured. Then, improvements to signal analysis methods were developed and verified through testing under realistic pipeline conditions. Finally, it built an experience base and defect sets to generalize the results from individual tools and analysis methods to the full range of practical applications.

Task 2 evaluated two inspection technologies for detecting stress corrosion cracks. The focus in Task 2 was on electromagnetic techniques that have been developed in recent years and that could be used on or as a

modification to existing MFL tools. Three subtasks evaluated velocity-induced remote-field techniques, remote-field eddy-current techniques, and external techniques for sizing stress corrosion cracks.¹

Task 3 is verifying the results from Tasks 1 and 2 by tests under realistic pipeline conditions. Task 3 is (1) extending the mechanical damage detection, signal decoupling, and sizing algorithms developed in the basic program to include the effects of pressure, (2) verifying the algorithms under pressurized conditions in GRI's 4,700 foot, 24-inch diameter Pipeline Simulation Facility (PSF) flow loop, and (3) developing techniques to measure stress and determine the severity of mechanical damage and cracks.

A drawback of present pig technology is the lack of a reliable pig performance verification procedure that is generally accepted by the pipeline industry and RSPA. The experience gained by the pipeline industry and RSPA with the use of the PSF flow loop in this project will provide a framework to develop procedures for evaluating pig performance. Defect detection reliability is critical if instrumented pigging is to be used as an in-line inspection tool in pipeline industry risk management programs.

The ultimate benefits of the project could be more efficient and cost-effective operations, maintenance programs to monitor and enhance the safety of gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipelines. Pipeline companies will benefit from having access to inspection technologies for detecting critical mechanical damage and stress-corrosion cracks. Inspection tool vendors will benefit by understanding where improvements are beneficial and needed. These benefits will support RSPA's long-range objective of ensuring the safety and reliability of the gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline infrastructure.

Issued in Washington, DC.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

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¹The report summarizing the work conducted under tasks 1 and 2 can be found from viewing the RSPA home page, <http://ops.dot.gov>.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-99-5442; Notice 2]

Chevron Pipe Line Company; Grant of Waiver

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

Chevron Pipe Line Company (CPL) petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR 19.612(b)(3), which requires that gas pipeline facilities in the Gulf of Mexico found to be exposed on the seabed or constituting a hazard to navigation be reburied so that the top of the pipe is 36 inches below the seabed.

CPL proposed to install concrete mesh blanket units to protect the pipeline from damage in lieu of the 36 inches of cover required by (19.612(b)(3)). Each concrete mesh blanket unit is a 20-foot by 8-foot by 9-inch section constructed from 160 individually cast 17-inch by 17-inch by 9-inch beveled concrete briquettes inter-connected with 3/4-inch polypropylene UV stabilized line.

On May 27, 1999 we published a notice of petition for waiver with request for comments in the **Federal Register** (60 FR 27809 May 25, 1995). We received two comments. The first commenter opined that the alternative to cover the line with a 9" concrete mat did not appear to provide equal protection to the pipeline to that of 36" of natural cover. The commenter further stated that the mat would produce a hump on the gulf floor which may create further safety risk. The second commenter expressed interest in the proposal to require a rock shield. The commenter believed that a pipe of the diameter would have been concrete coated before installation thus negating the need for any further protection of the pipe from the concrete mesh blanket units.

We have considered the concerns expressed by the commenter and agree that the concrete mat could under some circumstances pose a hazard to navigation by reducing the water depth by 9-inches. However, the potential for adverse consequences of a vessel striking the mat is less than the potential for adverse consequence for a vessel striking and rupturing a high pressure natural gas pipeline. As evidenced by repeated surveys in this area, the gulf floor consists of sugar sands which are highly susceptible to erosion. Although the concrete mats

would reduce the depth of water by 9-inches, the mats provide consistent penetration resistance and are designed to promote the collection of bottom silt and vegetative growth. This silt-in process is achieved by particulates dropping out of the water column as a result of reduced current flow across the mesh blankets and will add stability to the installation while building cover over the pipeline. The concrete blanket will consistently protect the line to an equal or greater degree as will 36-inches of soft, unstable natural cover.

We agree with the second commenter that the rock shield would be unnecessary if the pipeline is concrete coated. CPL confirms that the pipeline was concrete coated. Therefore we will not require a rock shield to be installed.

In consideration of the forgoing we find that the requested waiver of compliance with § 192.612(c)(3) is not inconsistent with pipeline safety. Therefore the request for waiver is granted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: L.E. Herrick by telephone at 202-366-5523, by fax at 202-366-4566, by mail at U.S. Department of Transportation, RSPA, DPS-10, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, or via e-mail to le.herrick@rspa.dot.gov regarding the subject matter of this notice.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 60118(c); 49 CFR 1.53.

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 5, 1999.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 99-20539 Filed 8-9-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the Application For Permit User Limited

Display Fireworks Under (18 U.S.C. Chapter 40, Explosives).

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before October 12, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Barnes, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20226, (202) 927-8930.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the form(s) and instructions should be directed to Michael Bouchard, Chief, Arson and Explosives Programs Division, 650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20226, (202) 927-7930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Application For Permit User Limited Display Fireworks Under (18 U.S.C. Chapter 40, Explosives).

OMB Number: 1512-0399.

Form Number: ATF F 5400.21.

Abstract: ATF F 5400.21 is used to verify the eligibility of and grant permission to the holder to buy or transport explosives in interstate commerce on a one-time basis. The record retention requirement for this information collection is indefinitely.

Current Actions: There are no changes to this information collection and it is being submitted for extension purposes only.

Type of Review: Extension.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit, individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1800.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 18 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 540.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS: Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: August 2, 1999.

William T. Earle,

Assistant Director (Management) CFO.

[FR Doc. 99-20566 Filed 8-9-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-NEW]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed new collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on the information needed to develop census data on veterans enrolled in VA's health care system.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before October 12, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Ann W. Bickoff, Veterans Health Administration (193B1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-NEW" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann W. Bickoff at (202) 273-8310.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VHA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VHA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility;