environmental issues related to the alternatives. An information packet describing the purpose of the project, the proposed alternatives, the impact areas to be evaluated, the citizen involvement program and the preliminary project schedule is being mailed to affected federal, state and local agencies and to interested parties on record. Others may request the scoping materials by contacting Mr. Edward Taylor at the address above or by calling him at (216) 566–5100. Scoping comments may be made verbally at any of the public scoping meetings or in writing. See **DATES** and **ADDRESSES** sections above for location and times. During scoping, comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, or environmental impacts to be evaluated and suggesting alternatives that are less costly or have less environmental impact while achieving similar transit objectives. Scoping is not an appropriate time to indicate a preference for a particular alternative. Comments on preferences should be communicated after the Draft EIS has been completed. The meeting will be held in an ''open house'' format and project representatives will be available to discuss the project throughout the time period given. Informational displays and written materials also will be available throughout the time period given. In addition to written comments which may be made at the meeting or as described below, a stenographer will be available at the meeting to record comments. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive further information as the project develops, contact Mr. Edward Taylor as previously described.

II. Description of Study Area and Project Needs

The study area is wholly within Cuyahoga County, Ohio. It is approximately 2.5-miles long and connects the central business district of Berea, Ohio with the existing GCRTA Red Line rapid transit terminus at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. The corridor also connects the International Exposition Center with the airport and Berea. Existing traffic is primarily carried by the Berea Freeway (OH 237), Eastland Road, Front Street and Prospect Street with high traffic volumes at many of the signalized intersections. The proposed rail extension is intended to provide a high quality connection between the existing Red Line terminus at the Airport, the I–X Center and Berea; to support economic revitalization of the Berea CBD through greater transit accessibility; to stimulate economic development at the I–X Center by improving transit access between Downtown Cleveland and the I–X Center; contribute to higher transit mode share for work trips between the southwest suburbs and Downtown Cleveland; improve opportunities for reverse commute transportation options; to help achieve regional clean air goals; and improve travel efficiencies in the Southwest Corridor.

III. Alternatives

Transportation alternatives proposed for evaluation include a No-Build Alternative which involves no change to transportation services or facilities in the corridor beyond those improvements currently programmed; a TSM alternative which includes a package of improvements to one or all elements of the transportation network intended to improve travel time, reduce congestion, and enhance land-use development or redevelopment; and a rail transit alternative which consists of extending the GCRTA Red Line utilizing varying alternative alignments, segment lengths and technologies. It is anticipated that the rail line extension would involve streetcar style operations in Berea.

IV. Probable Effects/Potential Impacts for Analysis

FTA and GCRTA plan to evaluate in the EIS all significant social, economic, and environmental impacts of the alternatives. Among the primary issues are transportation service changes including transit cost, service, patronage and its financial implications; the effect on traffic movement and railroad operations; community impacts, including land use planning and zoning compatibility, neighborhood compatibility, local and regional economic change, aesthetics, and utility relocation; cultural resource impacts, including air quality, noise and vibration, removal of pre-existing hazardous wastes, and effects on water resources and quality, natural features, and ecosystems. The proposed impact assessment and its evaluation criteria will take into account both positive and negative impacts, direct and indirect impacts, short-term (construction) and long-term (operation) impacts, and site-specific and corridor-wide impacts. Evaluation criteria will be consistent with applicable federal, State of Ohio and local standards, criteria, regulations, and policies. Mitigation measures will be explored for any adverse impacts that are identified as part of the analysis.

V. FTA Procedures

In accordance with the Federal Transit Act, as amended, and FTA policy, the Draft EIS will be prepared in conjunction with a major investment study and the Final EIS in conjunction with Preliminary Engineering. After its publication, the Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. On the basis of the Draft EIS and comments received, the GCRTA, in concert with the Ohio Department of Transportation and NOACA, and in consultation with Cuyahoga County, the Cities of Berea, Brook Park and Cleveland and other affected agencies, will select a locally preferred alternative. The GCRTA will then seek to have NOACA, the metropolitan planning organization for the Cleveland area, include the preferred alternative in the regional transportation plan and seek approval from FTA to continue with Preliminary Engineering and preparation of the Final EIS.

Issued on: August 6, 1997.

Joel P. Ettinger,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97–21160 Filed 8–8–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. PS–142; Notice 7]

Pipeline Safety: Communications Plan for Effective Public Communication and Involvement in the Pipeline Safety Risk Management Demonstration Program

AGENCY: Office of Pipeline Safety, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Research and Special Programs Administration's (RSPA) Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is establishing and implementing a Pipeline Risk Management Demonstration Program (Demonstration Program) in which pipeline operators will propose their pipelines as projects for the Demonstration Program. Effective communication among OPS, States, pipeline operators, community representatives, and other interested parties is a key part of this risk management initiative. Effective means for communication are vital to OPS understanding local safety and environmental conditions that may affect the demonstration projects. This document addresses how OPS intends to inform the community, seek public

input, and respond to public concerns. This document also describes how OPS will provide opportunities for meaningful public involvement, particularly for communities that may be located within a demonstration project area. Persons interested in receiving information about specific demonstration projects, or about the Demonstration Program overall can make their requests by commenting to this notice. OPS also seeks public comment on this Communications Plan.

DATES: Comments should be received no later than October 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to the Dockets Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Comments should identify the docket number (PS–142). Persons should submit the original document and one (1) copy. Persons wishing to receive confirmation of receipt of their comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard. The Dockets Facility is located on the plaza level of the Nassif Building in Room Number 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC. The Dockets Facility is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays when the facility is closed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eben M. Wyman, (202) 366–0918, or by e-mail (eben.wyman@rspa.dot.gov), regarding the subject matter of this Notice. Contact the Dockets Unit (202) 366–5046, for other material in the docket.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Today, pipeline companies must comply with regulations that apply relatively uniformly regardless of conditions that are specific to the location and the operation of the pipeline. Although pipelines have maintained a good record of public safety and environmental protection under the current regulatory structure, government and industry are continually looking to improve the pipeline safety program.

Pipeline operators and OPS seek to achieve a better understanding of the risks related to pipelines, where the risks are, and where and how operators can use resources effectively to reduce risk across the pipeline system, thereby better protecting both people and the environment. In addition, operators seek to gain more flexibility to address system-unique problems. Both government and industry want to have a greater knowledge and understanding of how to achieve superior safety and environmental protection, as well as increase reliability of pipeline service.

Risk management offers government and industry a comprehensive decision-making process. It includes the identification and analysis of risks, the identification, analysis and selection of alternative measures to control risks, and the subsequent evaluation of performance. It is one means by which an organization systematically identifies and assigns resources to address safety and environmental risks, as well as other business risks that affect the organization's ability to meet its objectives.

The Demonstration Program will give operators the opportunity to demonstrate that their risk management programs can achieve superior safety and environmental protection over and above what they have already achieved through their compliance with existing pipeline safety regulations. Government and industry will evaluate the benefits of risk management as a regulatory alternative, and will test whether or not it should be considered as an ongoing feature of the OPS regulatory program. In a memorandum issued to the DOT Secretary on October 12, 1996, the President provided policy direction on implementing the Demonstration Program. Two goals were clarified: (1) That OPS ensure that superior protection would be achieved through the Demonstration Program and, (2) that adequate opportunity would be provided for meaningful public involvement in the overall implementation and progress of the individual demonstration projects.

To effectively implement the Demonstration Program, OPS needs to increase public awareness and understanding of the value and importance of the pipeline network nationwide, provide a broad understanding of how pipeline companies operate their systems, and allow ample opportunity to openly discuss the possible impact of these operations on public safety and the environment.

To prepare to test risk management in individual demonstration projects, the Joint Risk Management Quality Teams (JRAQT), made up of Federal and State government, industry, and public representatives, studied the benefits and limitations of risk management as a regulatory alternative. The JRAQT investigated approaches that would allow pipeline operators greater flexibility to take site-specific considerations into account in addressing both hazardous liquid and natural gas pipeline safety and environmental protection. One of its reports, ''Survey of Regulatory Agency Applications of Risk Management,'' showed that risk management is already widely and successfully used in other industry and government practices.

The JRAQT designed a structured program so that risk management could be applied carefully, with results monitored and adjustments made as needed. The team created five documents to guide implementation of the Demonstration Program: the Program Framework (62 FR 14719), the Program Standard, Performance Measures Guidance, a Training Curriculum, and this Communications Plan. These documents and related information can be obtained by contacting Eben Wyman at (202) 366–0918.

Program Framework

This document provides information on how pipeline operators can propose and get approval of risk management projects. The steps in the Program are described, as well as the program objectives, selection criteria, and requirements, including how operators must provide for communication with the public.

Risk Management Program Standard Requirements

The Program Standard calls for both internal and external communications, that is communications inside the company as well as to outside stakeholders. It describes the basic elements and characteristics that should be contained in a company's risk management program. The Standard describes two sets of key elements: program and process elements. Program elements address the corporate responsibility for the structure and procedures to administer, document, communicate, and evaluate a risk management program. Process elements describe technical and analytical methods (i.e., the tools, models, and type of analyses) used to identify possible ways to control risks, allocate resources to control risks, monitor each project's performance, and apply information learned to improve the process.

A variety of steps are involved in identifying and reducing risks on a pipeline system. First, a company conducts a risk assessment, develops a risk profile of current pipeline conditions, and identifies possible adverse events that could occur. The likelihood and severity of these possible events are also evaluated. Second, the company examines the options for controlling the risks identified in the risk assessment and decides which

actions it can take to control the risks. Third, the company establishes performance measures to track the progress of the risk control activities and to evaluate if the intended effect of these actions is being achieved.

The Program Standard provides operators the flexibility needed to develop a risk management plan appropriate to the nature and extent of the risks being addressed in a demonstration project. Because risk management is a continuous improvement process, as new data becomes available, the operator can make adjustments accordingly.

II. Purpose and Objectives of Communications Plan

This Communications Plan (Plan) describes how OPS and industry will communicate with those who may be affected by, or interested in, a demonstration project. The Plan's purpose is to help communities and the public understand the Demonstration Program's goals, processes, safety issues, safety actions and anticipated outcomes within each of the demonstration projects. This communication will be successful if OPS provides access to information, receives feedback, interacts and responds to national, state, and community issues.

Both OPS and operators will work in partnership to provide information to all who may be affected by a demonstration project so they may understand and evaluate the potential benefits and liabilities of risk management. The success of the Demonstration Program depends on the ability to demonstrate, and therefore communicate, three goals: (1) Risk management can result in superior safety, environmental protection, and service reliability than could be achieved through sole compliance with current pipeline safety regulations; (2) resources will be better prioritized and more effectively applied under risk management; and (3) government and industry's discussion of risks and risk control options, and both their ability to impact desired outcomes, will increase under risk management.

OPS is building a two-way communication system designed to collect and distribute information to and from all parties that may be affected by a demonstration project through numerous direct mail and electronic means, as well as through direct contact. The goal is to enhance communication among OPS and national organizations and agencies, State and community representatives. Additionally, pipeline operators who apply to participate in the Demonstration Program must describe in their application how they too will communicate with communities affected by their projects.

Specific benefits of public involvement in the Demonstration Program for OPS, industry, State and community representatives include:

- Exchange of information about specific and relevant local factors during the decision-making process that may not be known at the Federal or State level; and
- Feedback regarding the success of the Demonstration Program in accomplishing the goals for which it was designed.

During the demonstration period, OPS will:

- Inform and educate about risk management;
- Provide project information and methods to provide input or feedback;
- Interact in a timely manner, and
- Respond and report back to all stakeholders.

To guide national and local communication initiatives, OPS expanded the communications workgroup within the JRAQT to involve other government agencies, public interest groups, environmental groups, industry and community representatives. The workgroup currently includes:

- National League of Cities
- National Association of Towns and Townships
- National Fire Protection Association
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- Fairfax Virginia Fire Department
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Port of Houston Authority
- International City/County Management Association
- Gas Research Institute
- Local Emergency Planning Committees
- Interstate Natural Gas Association of America
- American Petroleum Institute
- Shell Oil Products Company
- Northwest Pipeline Company
- New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
- Arizona Corporation Commission
- National Transportation Safety Board
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

For further information about participation in the communications workgroup, contact Eben M. Wyman on (202) 366–0918.

National Communications

1. By working through national organizations and agencies on the national level, OPS will continue to provide information about the Demonstration Program to other Federal agencies and to national public interest and environmental organizations that maintain outreach programs to community representatives. Our primary means to reach federal agencies is through the National Response Teams (NRT). Comprised of fifteen Federal agencies, the NRT representatives have agreed to identify any issues of concern they may have regarding potential demonstration sites. These agencies include the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, General Services Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, and Treasury. OPS will provide designated NRT regional officials with both national and project-specific information throughout the project review, approval, and monitoring process so they can identify issues of concern and provide feedback on individual demonstration projects in their regions.

2. **Federal Register** Notices: Opportunities for public comment will be provided following the publication of **Federal Register** notices during various stages of the Demonstration Program: (1) OPS will publish a notice describing the risk management proposals selected for consideration and consultation. This notice will describe the candidate's ''Letter of Intent'' (The number of proposals described in each notice will depend on the number submitted and screened for consultation at the time of publication.); (2) OPS will publish a follow-up notice once the consultation is underway to provide updated project information and to describe OPS outreach activities; and (3) another will be published announcing the final approval of the demonstration projects. These notices will include information describing the demonstration project, how the operator approaches external communication, and a list of contacts from whom to obtain additional information. Additionally, OPS will provide a prospectus to national, state, and community representatives that describes information specific to each demonstration project.

3. Internet Information System: PRIMIS—As part of its national communications efforts, OPS is also making information about pipeline risk management available via the Internet on the OPS Home Page (HTTP://ops.dot.gov/riskmgmt.htm). Internet access will provide additional means to locate information, as well as to solicit public comment. The OPS Home Page

will be used to disseminate information and to provide the public a central point of access to technical assistance.

OPS is creating a new data system, accessible to all interested parties through the Internet, to collect and exchange project information. It is called the Pipeline Risk Management Information System (PRIMIS). This data system will help OPS perform project consultation, approval and audit functions during the Demonstration Program, and will help facilitate communication of the resulting information. PRIMIS will serve as a repository of information on the Risk Management Program as a whole and will provide details concerning each of the demonstration projects. It is a place where interested parties can provide information, comments or questions for OPS.

Each of the incoming letters of intent, as well as other significant documentation, will be entered and retained in the PRIMIS system. PRIMIS will include a company profile developed by OPS, specific information on the company's demonstration project, including the risk control alternatives proposed in the Letter of Intent, and follow-up information through the screening, consultation, and implementation phases. The system will also be used to track significant meetings, program milestones, events, commitments, and follow-up dates during the consultation process. PRIMIS will be accessible via the OPS Home Page in September, 1997.

4. Electronic ''town meetings'': To provide further access to information on the Demonstration Program, OPS aired an electronic town meeting to discuss the risk management program and candidate projects. Based on feedback received from this effort, OPS is considering using this method as a regular feature of future communication efforts. This two-way live broadcast was aired on June 5, 1997, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Education Network (EENET). Use of EENET was intended to involve thousands of public safety and emergency management officials. During the live broadcast, viewers had an opportunity to pose questions and voice concerns to OPS, State, industry and community representatives. OPS is seeking ways to expand the audience to include local safety and environmental protection officials as well as other community representatives. The town meeting broadcast was also available via new Internet technology, which provided the information via linkage to personal computers. Videotapes of this broadcast will be available to loan to interested parties from their State pipeline safety office, or from OPS Headquarters. Individuals can request to borrow a copy of the videotape via the OPS Home page (http://ops.dot.gov), or by contacting OPS by e-mail (pipeline.safety@dot.gov). State emergency managements agencies will also have a copy.

5. Identifying other resources: The communications workgroup mentioned earlier will assist in identifying information that meets the needs of local communities and methods to distribute information. Use of the Internet, electronic ''town meetings'' and regional briefings to provide project status reports are examples of methods to communicate risk management activities on a national basis. We will identify other resources during the course of the Demonstration Program.

Local Communications

Both OPS and participating operators are responsible for local level communications focused on communities within a demonstration project site area. In its proposal, an operator is required to describe to OPS its external communication methods as defined in the Program Standard, including the types of information to be communicated and the audiences to receive that information. Companies will also describe the methods of communication, individuals or organizations responsible for providing information, and methods of receiving feedback from these audiences.

The operator will initiate communications at the start of the project to inform community representatives about key issues, progress and to solicit feedback. Operators will build on existing public education and outreach programs. The operator will describe to OPS how it plans to address public interests and concerns, and how it will communicate to community representatives with varied interests such as local officials, environmental organization representatives, and fire, rescue, safety and health organization representatives. These representatives could include members of organized groups that have a continuing interest in pipeline safety issues, or citizens with an interest in the projects who come forward with questions or suggestions.

OPS will work with operators to help identify interested parties and to answer questions from State officials and community representatives. OPS will also help operators gather relevant information regarding local, site-specific issues in locations of their demonstration projects. OPS and operators will provide information to effectively address issues of concern. Many channels of communication, including local media sources in various demonstration project areas, will be pursued as a means of communication. OPS seeks names of media contacts interested in following demonstration projects.

As stated earlier, OPS will provide a prospectus on each of the demonstration projects being considered to State officials and community representatives that may be interested in reviewing project information, providing input, or monitoring the progress of the project. Each prospectus will contain basic information about the company and its proposed demonstration project, describe the operator's approach to communication with States and community representatives, and identify individuals who can be contacted for information, questions or comments. These contacts will be OPS, company, and State pipeline agency representatives (if the State agrees to participate). OPS will provide additional information on project objectives, risk management alternatives, and performance measures and progress throughout the demonstration period.

III. Commonly Asked Questions

The following are two commonly asked questions regarding the Demonstration Program. OPS will continue to address these and other questions received from interested parties using the communication techniques described above.

A. What Are the Expected Benefits of the Risk Management Demonstration Program?

1. Risk Management Should Help OPS Better Protect the Public and the Environment

While the traditional approach to safety is effective in determining if prescribed safety requirements are carried out, it does not require a structured process to identify risks or to validate the solutions being implemented. Risk management is intended to provide a more complete understanding of risks and to provide methods and models to produce the most appropriate and cost effective measures to reduce risk.

2. Risk Management Is Designed To Yield Improved Information for Policy and Decision-Making

Since risk management is predicated on identifying and understanding potential threats to a pipeline system,

the risk management approach to safety is likely to generate improved data to enhance decision-making by both operators and regulators. Both government and industry should learn more from available data about a wide range of risks and system configurations to help determine the most effective methods to measure performance and monitor risk activities.

3. Risk Management Will Allow Pipeline Safety Programs To Be Tailored to Local Conditions

Risk management will permit pipeline operators and OPS to focus greater attention on those pipeline systems, or segments of those systems, where there is an opportunity to reduce risk and achieve superior safety, environmental protection and service reliability. The goal is to design risk management programs that best address pipeline-specific conditions.

4. Risk Management Should Provide Increased Operator Flexibility To Achieve Superior Safety

Through risk management, operators plan to use expert knowledge and experience to tailor company safety plans to unique system conditions, providing them with the flexibility to select the best methods to address risks.

5. The Risk Management Demonstration Program Will Be Built Through Partnerships

A partnership was formed among OPS, the pipeline industry, and State and community representatives to examine risk management principles and to evaluate if they should be tested as an alternative approach to pipeline regulation. This partnership is expected to continue to improve information exchange between all parties participating in the Demonstration Program.

B. How Will the Demonstration Program Work?

1. OPS Will Oversee the Risk Management Demonstration Program Process

OPS will carefully assess each proposed demonstration project to determine whether superior safety and environmental protection can be achieved. Before OPS issues an order approving a demonstration project, a Project Review Team (PRT), made up of OPS representatives (assisted by voluntary State support), will meet with the candidate to clarify all relevant aspects of the project. To accomplish this, OPS will seek input from other Federal agencies, affected states and other safety and environmental officials on their issues and concerns, including their knowledge of candidate companies' safety and environmental compliance records.

The selection process will involve a comprehensive review of the candidate's pipeline system and consultation with the candidate. There are two important operator submissions.

The first submission is the Letter of Intent. This initial letter is an expression of an operator's interest in participating in the Demonstration Program. It describes a specific demonstration project the operator would like OPS to consider for inclusion in the Demonstration Program. Following the receipt of the Letter of Intent, OPS will contact the company to set up a series of consultation meetings. The second submission is the Formal Application and Work Plan, which the operator will prepare after discussions with the PRT have resulted in a mutually acceptable demonstration project. This submission formally documents the terms and conditions of the project and is the basis upon which OPS will approve or reject the operator's project.

Adjustments may be necessary to specific areas of the project before it starts. Such adjustments will take into account community concerns. Other adjustments or modifications may also occur during the course of the project, and may come from periodic reviews by the PRT.

2. Basic Regulatory Roles and Responsibilities Will Not Change Under Risk Management

The Federal government's fundamental responsibilities and authority will remain the same. OPS will continue to set standards for, and independently assess, pipeline safety and integrity. Oversight will be improved as government agencies focus on better understanding how individual pipelines are operated, how risk-based decisions are made, what effective alternatives exist for reducing risk, and whether the intended results are being achieved.

3. Clear and Ambitious Performance Goals Will Be Set

OPS has worked with representatives of State pipeline safety agencies and industry to develop guidance on performance measures that will be used to evaluate the results of the demonstration projects. Many of the performance measures will be designed to evaluate at the national program level whether superior safety and environmental protection are achieved through this alternative approach to government oversight.

In addition, performance measures will be designed for government and industry to monitor the achievement of desired safety, environmental and service reliability results at the individual project level. OPS and operators should be able to demonstrate improved accountability to the community as a result of these measures.

4. The Demonstration Program Welcomes Public Input

Improving public involvement has been a Program goal from the beginning. Government and industry sought public input through the November 1995, the May 1996, and the January 1997 risk management public meetings. The public's views have also been sought through the OPS Home Page on the Internet (HTTP://ops.dot.gov), presentations to groups representing emergency responders and State and community representatives, and through newsletters and **Federal Register** notices. The previously described Communications Plan has been designed to continue and enhance the public's involvement.

5. Opportunities to Address Public Concerns

The demonstration project review, consultation, approval, and communication process is designed to give appropriate opportunities to raise concerns and to seek information about particular demonstration projects. Participating companies will facilitate this process by coordinating with Federal, State and local authorities to provide methods of information sharing to community representatives.

6. Safeguards Will Be Maintained

The OPS regulatory program that has been in place for 25 years will continue to be the means of oversight of all pipelines not participating in the Demonstration Program. Pipelines participating in demonstration projects will also continue to be safeguarded. OPS and State pipeline agencies will maintain regulatory oversight activities on all existing pipelines involved inside and outside the Demonstration Program.

7. The Focus Will Be on Those Who Can Succeed

The previously described Program Standard and Framework processes are designed to provide many checks and balances in the selection process. The process is intended to identify companies that will comply with the Program Standard, achieve superior

safety and environmental protection through risk management, work in partnership with OPS to evaluate the merits of risk management, and show a corporate commitment to use the risk management process as a day-to-day part of their business practices. The selection criteria for the Demonstration Program favors those proposals that are the most comprehensive. The company must also have a clear and established record of compliance in the existing program in order to be considered for participation.

8. Enforceable Agreements and Incentives To Perform

Just as the traditional regulatory system provides a clear process to monitor performance, so must the risk management alternative. Once OPS approves a Formal Application and Work Plan, an order will be issued and notice made to the public through the **Federal Register**. The order will specify the pipeline safety regulatory requirements for the period of the demonstration, and set forth the terms and conditions for the operator's participation in the project.

OPS will have an audit plan to monitor how well the operator is meeting the performance goals. OPS's full statutory authority to inspect pipeline facilities remains in effect.

Should any unsafe conditions arise, OPS will work with participating companies to see that such conditions are quickly remedied.

OPS invites comments on ways we can make the communications program more meaningful.

Issued in Washington, DC, on August 5, 1997.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 97–21117 Filed 8–8–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–60–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB–477 (Sub–No. 2X)]

Owensville Terminal Company, Inc—Abandonment Exemption—in Gibson and Posey Counties, IN

On July 22, 1997, Owensville Terminal Company, Inc. (OTC) filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad known as the Cynthiana-Owensville line, extending from railroad milepost 277.0 north of Cynthiana to railroad milepost 271.0 north of Owensville, a distance of 6.0 miles, in Gibson and Posey Counties, IN. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 47665 and includes the station of Owensville at railroad milepost 271.5.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it. The interest of railroad employees will be protected by *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by November 7, 1997.

Any offer of financial assistance under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at $900. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than September 2, 1997. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a $150 filing fee. *See* 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB–477 (Sub-No. 2X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423–0001, and (2) Thomas F. McFarland, Jr., McFarland & Herman, 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1330, Chicago, IL 60606–2902.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565–1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565–1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565–1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Decided: August 1, 1997.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97–21127 Filed 8–8–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915–00–P

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 Firearms Transaction Record, Part II Non-Over-The-Counter.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before October 10, 1997 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 Nicholas Colucci, Firearms and Explosives Operations Branch, 650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20226, (202) 927–8310.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Firearms Transaction Record, Part II Non-Over-The Counter.

OMB Number: 1512–0130.

Form Number: ATF F 4473 (5300.9) Part II.

Abstract: ATF F 4473 (5300.9) Part II is used to determine the eligibility under the Gun Control Act (GCA) of a