

Robin Rorick
Group Director, Midstream
& Industry Operations
American Petroleum Institute
1220 L St., NW
Washington, DC 20005

Andrew J. Black
President & CEO
Association of Oil Pipe Lines
1808 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20006

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DOT Docket Management System
Docket No. PHMSA-2014-0092
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Comments of the American Petroleum Institute and the Association of Oil Pipe Lines on, “Pipeline Safety: Request for Revision of a Previously Approved Information Collection: National Pipeline Mapping System Program (OMB Control No. 2137-0596)”: Docket No. PHMSA-2014-0092

The American Petroleum Institute (“API”)¹ and the Association of Oil Pipe Lines (“AOPL”)² (collectively, “the Associations”) appreciate the opportunity to comment in response to the Notice and request for public comment on “Request for Revision of a Previously Approved Information Collection - National Pipeline Mapping System (*OMB Control Number: 2137-0596*)” (hereinafter “Notice”)³ issued by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (“PHMSA”). The Associations and their members support the modernization of the National Pipeline Mapping System (“NPMS”), improving the accuracy of data submitted, and the inclusion of additional information. API and AOPL members stand ready to work toward the development of a revised NPMS consistent with the goals of continuously improving the effectiveness of pipeline safety programs, enhancing the ability of emergency response personnel to provide more effective assistance in the event of a pipeline incident, and promoting public awareness of pipeline infrastructure. Notwithstanding this general support, the revised Notice continues to raise concerns that require further consideration before PHMSA moves forward

¹ API is the national trade association representing all facets of the oil and natural gas industry, which supports 9.8 million U.S. jobs and 8 percent of the U.S. economy. API’s more than 625 members include large integrated companies, as well as exploration and production, refining, marketing, pipeline, and marine businesses, and service and supply firms. They provide most of the nation’s energy and are backed by a growing grassroots movement of more than 25 million Americans. Together, API and AOPL members operate approximately 90% of the hazardous liquids pipeline miles in the United States.

² AOPL is a national trade association that represents owners and operators of oil pipelines across North America and educates the public about the vital role oil pipelines serve in the daily lives of Americans. AOPL members bring crude oil to the nation’s refineries and important petroleum products to our communities, including all grades of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, home heating oil, kerosene, propane, and biofuels.

³ 80 Fed. Reg. 52084 (Aug. 27, 2015).

with, and the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) approves, an information collection request (“Information Collection”) for a revised NPMS.

API and AOPL appreciated PHMSA’s decision to issue a revised Information Collection, which addressed a number of API and AOPL’s original concerns. We are pleased that PHMSA dropped several of the following attributes that were of concern to API and AOPL, including: 1) leak detection; 2) special permits; 3) installation method if a pipe crosses water greater than 100 feet in width; 4) throughput; and, 5) refinery location.⁴ We also commend PHMSA for consulting with the Transportation Security Administration (“TSA”) to categorize each attribute based on security concerns.⁵ API and AOPL also further support a phased approach for data collection, as a number of the attributes will take considerable resources and time to collect. As outlined below, API and AOPL do have some remaining concerns regarding the data collection timeframes and proposed security levels. API and AOPL ask that PHMSA give serious consideration to the requests proposed by API and AOPL for each attribute below.

I. General Concerns with The Revised Information Collection

A. Development of a Working Group Process

On September 10, 2015 PHMSA held a workshop to discuss the revised Information Collection. The workshop illustrated a number of ongoing concerns from the industry. API and AOPL believe that further discussion is still warranted and could be best addressed through further collaboration between PHMSA and interested stakeholders. API and AOPL request that PHMSA continue to engage in a collaborative process to address the appropriate scope and content of a revised NPMS prior to requesting that OMB approve the proposed information collection.

As such, API and AOPL urge PHMSA to form a working group and initiate a collaborative process to address the appropriate scope and content of a revised NPMS prior to requesting that OMB approve the proposed information collection. The working group would provide an opportunity for PHMSA, pipeline operators, and other stakeholders to carefully consider the array of complex technical, security, operational and information disclosure issues raised by the Information Collection. The working group should also address the feasibility of implementation and associated timelines. The liquids pipeline industry stands ready to participate in such a collaborative process and help facilitate the development of appropriate revisions to NPMS.

B. Protection of Security Sensitive and Other Confidential Information

We appreciate that PHMSA has provided a level of protection for a number of attributes that presented security concerns to the Associations. Specifically, API and AOPL are appreciative that PHMSA, in discussion with the TSA, has classified the following data elements

⁴ Id. at 52085-86.

⁵ Id. at 52092.

as Sensitive Security Information (“SSI”): highest percent operating SMYS; MAOP/MOP; segment “could affect” an HCA; pump and compressor stations; and mainline block valves.⁶

In the Notice, PHMSA provides that these elements, based on their classification as SSI, will be “kept in an SSI-compliant environment at PHMSA” and “would be released to no other parties except for government agencies who can verify they maintain an SSI-compliant environment.”⁷ API and AOPL appreciate this effort by PHMSA to ensure that such critical energy infrastructure information is adequately protected; however, the Notice does not clarify whether the verification of SSI-compliance is made on the basis of a statement by the government agency or through demonstrable processes illustrating how the government agency is SSI-compliant. Therefore, API and AOPL request that PHMSA clarify the process through which it will verify that it is SSI-compliant. As discussed in the initial comments, these elements carry vast security implications if improperly disclosed, and it is imperative that the elements are not only classified as SSI, but are also safeguarded through a process that requires the government agency to affirmatively show that it is SSI-compliant.

API and AOPL request that PHMSA continue to carefully review the security implications of disclosing information proposed for collection pursuant to the Notice. API and AOPL also request that PHMSA continue to consult with the TSA, safety management professionals, and industry participants, to ensure necessary safeguards are in place to protect pipeline and related assets from any increased risk that could result from the Information Collection requested in the revised Notice.

C. Ensure Benefits to Pipeline Safety Justify the Costs

As noted in API and AOPL’s prior comments, the proposed data collection would require the dedication of significant resources by pipeline operators. The proposed Information Collection would require operators to hire additional personnel, invest in employee training, and expend resources to revise data compilation and entry procedures. Based upon feedback from API and AOPL members, operators estimate they would individually incur between \$10.8 million to \$21 million to adopt the technologies, hire personnel, and obtain greater positional accuracy as set forth in the Information Collection. These costs should also be viewed collectively with the additional regulations recently issued by PHMSA. Specifically, the *Safety of Hazardous Liquid Pipelines* Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NPRM”),⁸ which was published in the Federal Register on October 13, 2015, anticipates that “the estimated annual costs for the different requirements range from approximately \$1,000 to \$16.7 million, with aggregate costs of approximately \$22.4 million.”⁹ According to the NPRM, the variations in compliance costs exist because “the requirements vary widely.”¹⁰ Similarly, the costs associated with the *Cost Recovery, Accident and Incident Notification, and Other Pipeline Safety Proposed Changes* NPRM (“July NPRM”),¹¹ published in the Federal Register on July 10, 2015, were

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id.

⁸ 80 Fed. Reg. 61610 (Oct. 13, 2015).

⁹ Id. at 61611.

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ 80 Fed. Reg. 39916 (July 10, 2015).

extraordinary. Industry comments estimated actual compliance with just the July NPRM would be as high as \$480 million, more than 180 times greater than PHMSA's evaluation.¹² API and AOPL encourage PHMSA to consider the impact of the proposed information collection in conjunction with recent rulemakings for a more accurate picture of the cost burden to the industry.

Lastly, the revised Notice did not indicate where the Information Collection overlapped with the Annual Report. As previously requested, API and AOPL ask that PHMSA not impose duplicative obligations on pipeline operators. PHMSA should remove requirements that would lead to duplicative submissions. This should be clearly evaluated and stated for each attribute requested.

D. Emergency Responder Outreach Strategy

The revised Notices says, "NPMS is used by government officials, pipeline operators, and the general public for a variety of tasks including emergency response, smart growth planning, critical infrastructure protection, and environmental protection."¹³ Based on feedback from API and AOPL members, very few emergency responders (i.e., Fire, County, Police, EMS) are actually currently aware of NPMS and use NPMS as a planning tool. PHMSA should focus its attention on the usefulness of NPMS for emergency responders. API and AOPL suggest that PHMSA develop a public awareness and outreach program that outlines how it plans to direct more emergency responder attention to NPMS and provide a usable interface for planning and responding to pipeline incidents. Emergency responders need to be able to answer basic questions about pipeline operations within their jurisdiction in order to effectively develop response plans. Therefore, it is imperative that PHMSA develop a long-term strategy to ensure that the NPMS continues to evolve as a useful tool for its intended purposes. As a part of this strategy, PHMSA should also be aware of how many Pipeline Information Management Mapping Application (PIMMA) users are actually using the tool for preparedness and response.

E. Phased Implementation of Proposed Information Collection

API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA implemented a phased approach for incorporating additional information into the NPMS.¹⁴ API and AOPL continue to request that PHMSA clearly state that it will consider a variance or waiver of compliance with the Information Collection for situations in which the operator is unable to meet the new reporting obligations but good faith has been demonstrated or extenuating circumstances exist.

F. Definition of "Predominant"

API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA provided a definition for "predominant." In the revised Notice, PHMSA defines "predominant" as follows: "90 percent or higher of the pipe segment being submitted to the NPMS."¹⁵ However, this definition of predominant fails to

¹² Id. at 39917. PHMSA estimated annual compliance costs of \$3.1 million in the NPRM.

¹³ 80 Fed. Reg. 52084, at 52092.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Id. at 52089.

ensure a predominant value in all cases. For example, an operator would not be able to define “predominant” if there are multiple relocations from multiple decades along the segment. API and AOPL request that “predominant” be defined in such a way so that there will always be a “predominant” attribute for a pipeline segment. The following definition would provide such clarity: “On a per mile basis, the most utilized pipe characteristic on a pipeline segment (e.g. predominant coating type would be the coating that was used to the greatest extent as compared to other coatings).” Should PHMSA choose to keep the definition proposed in the most recent notice, API and AOPL request that guidance be provided on what characteristic should be submitted when there is no predominant characteristic. Lastly, it is not clear in the Notice where the definition of “predominant” applies. API and AOPL have specified in our comments below which attributes should be provided on a “predominant” basis.

II. Comments on Specific Proposals

1. Positional Accuracy

The revised notice proposes that for pipeline segments located within an HCA or areas that “could-affect” an HCA, pipeline operators submit data to the NPMS with a positional accuracy of with +/- 50 feet.¹⁶ This is a substantial improvement from the original request requiring a positional accuracy of five feet. API and AOPL appreciate PHMSA for addressing the industry’s concerns and fully recognizing existing industry capabilities. For gas transmission operators, PHMSA requests that data be submitted within a positional accuracy of +/- 50 feet for all pipeline segments within “a right-of-way for a designated interstate, freeway, expressway, or other principal 4-lane arterial roadway.”¹⁷ API requests that PHMSA provide operators with access to a single source of highway data in order to ensure accuracy and avoid duplicative efforts. As noted in the original comments submitted by API and AOPL, achieving +/- 50 foot positional accuracy for all pipeline segments still presents significant challenges and expenditure of operator resources, which necessitates allowance for a sufficient implementation timeframe. Increasing positional accuracy would require pipelines to adopt, upgrade, or integrate expensive new technologies, re-survey the majority of their pipeline systems, and update the centerline location and associated records. Operators have estimated that this could take several years to achieve even assuming ideal conditions. Therefore, API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA moved the data collection request for this attribute to Phase 3.

API and AOPL request clarification from PHMSA regarding the acceptable methods for submitting positional accuracy.

Lastly, the disclosure of detailed positional accuracy information raises serious concerns about the security of pipeline infrastructure. Precise positional accuracy information could provide actionable intelligence information that could be used against our homeland, and thereby create an unnecessary risk to the safety and security of human life and property. The revised notice does not specify the security level proposed for positional accuracy.¹⁸ API and AOPL

¹⁶ Id. at 52086-87.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Id. at 52092. Section IV.D of the revised Notice does not specify the data security level for positional accuracy.

request that, at a minimum, positional accuracy be PIMMA protected to ensure that sensitive information regarding energy infrastructure is disclosed in a responsible manner and effectively eliminates the threat that such information will fall into nefarious hands and threaten the safety of the public and the environment.

2. Pipe Diameter

API and AOPL do not oppose the collection of data on the nominal diameter of a pipe segment and appreciate that PHMSA clarified that only “nominal” information is sought and not “actual” pipeline diameter information. API and AOPL agree that this information can be provided in Phase 1 and categorized as a PIMMA element.

3. Wall Thickness

PHMSA has proposed to continue with the proposed data collection on the nominal wall thickness of a pipe.¹⁹ Collecting wall thickness on a local basis will require operators to conduct an extensive review of the GIS data. Further, most pipeline operators do not even currently store this information in their GIS systems. Because of this, API and AOPL request that PHMSA provide more time to integrate this information into its GIS system and move the data collection from Phase 1 to Phase 2. API requests clarification on whether this information will be required for grandfathered (natural gas) pipelines and on pipelines where a yield test has been performed to vet MAOP-MOP. Additionally, PHMSA should clarify if the lowest wall thickness may be used per diameter from the manufacturer. API and AOPL agree with including this information on the PIMMA website.

4. Commodity Detail

The revised Information Collection seeks details for commodities transported through each system.²⁰ While providing this information would be valuable to emergency responders, API and AOPL respectfully submit that the commodity being transferred through pipelines can change on a daily basis. As such, entering this information into the NPMS will not necessarily correspond to a precise moment, and therefore would be of little utility to first responders. Therefore, API and AOPL request that PHMSA refrain from including this attribute in the NPMS.

5. Pipe Material

In the revised Notice, PHMSA continues to propose that operators submit data on the type of pipe material per segment.²¹ As liquids pipelines are generally comprised of steel, API and AOPL still question the value of this metric; however, API and AOPL members believe that they are able to provide this information to PHMSA in Phase 1 should the agency move forward with collection of this information. API and AOPL do not oppose including this information in

¹⁹ Id. at 52087.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ Id. at 52087-88.

the NPMS public viewer. API and AOPL request that PHMSA specify the level of data security for this element, as the revised Noticed did not include this element in Section IV.²²

6. Pipe Grade

The revised Notice continues to request that operators submit information on the “predominant” pipe grade of a pipeline segment.²³ API and AOPL request that PHMSA incorporate the proposed definition of “predominant” as stated in Section I.F of these comments. API and AOPL do not oppose this information collection; however, pipeline operators will need to devote substantial time and resources to incorporate this information into their GIS systems before the information can be included in the NPMS. Given the time needed to incorporate the information into GIS systems, API and AOPL believe that this information should be collected in Phase 2 and not in Phase 1 as indicated in the revised notice. API requests that PHMSA clarify whether this information is required on grandfathered (natural gas) and on pipelines where a yield test has been performed to vet MAOP-MOP.”

API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA provided a level of protection for a number of attributes that presented security concerns to the associations in the original proposed information collection request. API and AOPL respectfully request that PHMSA clarify the intended level of security for pipe grade, as the revised Notice includes this element in both the PIMMA website and the public viewer. API and AOPL continue to request that, given the potential security risks of disclosing this information, PHMSA include this information on the PIMMA website only and not in the public viewer.

7. Pipe Join Method

In the revised Notice, PHMSA proposes that operators submit data on the pipe joining method. The revised Notice states that this information is used by PHMSA for determining risk rankings and evaluations. As discussed in Section I.C, API and AOPL ask that any plan to collect this information should consider the costs and burdens that would be incurred by pipeline operators and the time needed to prepare reporting this information to NPMS. Given the high cost of collecting such information, PHMSA should request this information on a “predominant” basis. API and AOPL request that PHMSA incorporate the proposed definition of “predominant” as stated in Section I.F of these comments. Although API and AOPL have reservations about the utility of this information for emergency response, they do not oppose this information collection. That being said, pipeline operators will need sufficient time to incorporate this information into GIS systems before it is included in the NPMS. Therefore, API and AOPL disagree with the proposal to request this information in Phase 1 and request that pipe joining method data be integrated into the NPMS system in Phase 2. API and AOPL also respectfully request that this information be included on the PIMMA website only and not in the public viewer as proposed.

²² Id. at 52092.

²³ Id. at 52088.

8. Highest Operating Percent SMYS

The revised Notice proposes that pipeline operators should submit information pertaining to the percent at which the pipeline is operating to Specified Minimum Yield Strength (“SMYS”)²⁴. PHMSA revised the definition of SMYS to the following: “Hoop stress corresponding to the maximum operating pressure (MOP) or maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) as a percentage of SMYS.”²⁵

API and AOPL do not oppose this attribute’s inclusion in NPMS, but request that PHMSA not initiate this collection until Phase 2, so that operators have sufficient time to incorporate the information into their GIS systems. In addition, since SMYS demonstrates a particular pipeline segment’s vulnerabilities, and given that it would be collected on a segment-specific basis, API and AOPL agree that the information should be provided PIMMA protection. Further, API and AOPL continue to suggest that this attribute would be most useful if collected in the following SMYS intervals -- <20, 20-50, 50-70, 70-72, 72+. API requests clarification on whether this information will be required on grandfathered (natural gas) pipelines or on pipelines where a yield test has been performed to vet MAOP-MOP. API and AOPL request that PHMSA clarify whether it is necessary to provide all variable operating percentages of SMYS. Finally, in order to avoid duplicative reporting, to the extent that SMYS information is submitted to PHMSA for inclusion in the NPMS, pipeline operators should not also be required to include the information in the Annual Report.

9. Maximum Operating Pressure

In the revised Notice, PHMSA continues to propose that pipeline operators submit the maximum MAOP or MOP information for each pipeline segment²⁶. As API and AOPL have indicated in earlier comments, it would be extremely burdensome and difficult for liquids pipelines to provide MOP information on a segment-by-segment basis given the variable nature of MOP. Further, MOP is not currently geospatially defined in operator systems, and is generally maintained in separate systems from the data submitted to NPMS.

Should NPMS proceed with the collection of this attribute, API and AOPL request that the data be collected in Phase 3, and not in Phase 1 as proposed in the revised Notice in order to give operators sufficient time to collect the information. It is also requested that PHMSA provide a definition of MOP for purposes of reporting in NPMS. In practice, some operators define it as the maximum pressure at the hydraulic low point for a given discharge pressure, while others define it as a maximum discharge pressure. Lastly, API and AOPL request that this information is only provided for pipelines operating at \geq 20% SMYS.

As indicated in API and AOPL’s earlier comments, PHMSA should fully recognize that the release of MOP information could increase security risks on specific pipeline segments. API and AOPL appreciate that this information will be classified as SSI. API and AOPL ask that PHMSA continue to exercise the highest level of security concern for such data. Particularly

²⁴ Id. at 52088

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ Id.

when combined with other information proposed to be collected in the Notice, disclosure of MOP information could be used to target segments of critical infrastructure that could result in significant harm to human life, the environment, and property.

10. Seam Type

PHMSA continues to propose that operators submit data on the seam type of each pipe segment²⁷. As seam types may vary within pipeline segments, API and AOPL request that PHMSA clarify that it is seeking only the “predominant” type. Again, API and AOPL request that PHMSA incorporate the proposed definition of “predominant” as stated in Section I.F of these comments. Liquid pipeline operators believe they would be able to provide this information in Phase 2, not Phase 1, as proposed. API and AOPL also agree that it should be included only on the PIMMA website. Lastly, API requests clarification on whether this information is required for grandfathered (natural gas) pipelines and on pipelines where a yield test has been performed to vet MAOP-MOP.

11. Decade of Installation

In the revised Notice, PHMSA proposes that operators submit data on the “predominant decade of construction or installation.”²⁸ API and AOPL request that PHMSA incorporate the proposed definition of “predominant” as stated in Section I.F of these comments. Currently, “predominant” is defined in such a way that it precludes the possibility of always having a “predominant” attribute for a pipeline segment. This definition will have negative consequences in certain applications. For example, an operator would not be able to define “predominant” if there are multiple relocations from multiple decades along the segment.

With the requested clarifications for the definition of “predominant”, API and AOPL members believe they can provide the requested information. API and AOPL agree with providing the information in Phase 2 and including this information on the PIMMA website only.

12. Onshore/Offshore Pipeline Designations

The revised Notice continues to request that operators submit information on whether a pipe segment is onshore or offshore²⁹. In the revised Notice, PHMSA states that guidance will be issued in the NPMS Operator Standards Manual on how to determine whether a pipeline is offshore or onshore for the purpose of this data collection. The current NPMS Operator Standards manual defines onshore and offshore as: “whether a pipe is onshore or offshore according to the operator’s records. Must match the offshore/onshore designations submitted in the operator’s annual report to PHMSA.”³⁰ PHMSA should affirm whether or not this is the intended definition. As previously requested, API and AOPL also ask that PHMSA provide

²⁷ Id.

²⁸ Id. at 52089

²⁹ Id.

³⁰ Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. (2015). *National Pipeline Mapping System Operator Standards Manual: Draft to accompany Information Collection 2137-0596*.

pipeline operators its shape file for onshore and offshore designations to determine such designations in order to streamline and clarify the onshore/offshore determinations for all stakeholders. Reporting guidance is also requested for unique instances, such as how to report on pipeline segments that cross between onshore and offshore boundaries.

API and AOPL agree that this attribute could be integrated in Phase 1, so long as the onshore-offshore designations have been clearly defined and provided to operators. API and AOPL request this attribute be included on the PIMMA site and not included on the public viewer.

13. In-line Inspection

In the revised Notice, PHMSA continues to propose that operators indicate whether each system is capable of accommodating inline inspection (ILI) tools³¹. The Notice states that this information will help PHMSA track progress related to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations, particularly to identify operational complications that limit the use of ILI tools in “piggable” pipelines.

API and AOPL believe this information can be provided in Phase 1 and included on the PIMMA website, as PHMSA proposes.

14. High Consequence “Could Affect” Information

PHMSA continues to request that hazardous liquid and gas transmission operators identify pipeline segments which “could affect” HCAs as defined by 49 C.F.R § 195.450³². PHMSA asserts that this information is necessary for emergency response planners and to identify areas subject to integrity management procedures. API and AOPL request that PHMSA clearly define “could affect,” as it is not currently defined in 49 C.F.R § 195.450.

API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA provided a level of protection for a number of attributes that presented security concerns in the original proposed information collection request. API and AOPL respectfully request that PHMSA clarify the intended level of security for this element. Section III of the revised ICR indicates that “could affect” data will be protected under PIMMA, while Section IV states that the data will be protected as SSI. API and AOPL urge PHMSA to classify this information as SSI.

API and AOPL agree with the proposed Phase 2 data collection timeframe.

15. Year of Last In-line Inspection and Year of Last Direct Assessment

PHMSA continues to request the collection of data detailing the year of a pipeline’s last corrosion, dent, crack or “other” ILI inspection, and to collect the year of the last direct

³¹ 80 Fed. Reg. 52084, at 52089

³² Id. at 52089-90

assessment³³. API and AOPL agree that this information should be collected in Phase 2 and that the information be included on the PIMMA website.

16. Pipe Coating/Type of Coating

PHMSA proposes that operators include the level and types of coating on a pipeline segment in the NPMS system³⁴. API and AOPL have previously noted that pipe coating may vary with some frequency throughout a pipeline system. Therefore, API and AOPL request that PHMSA only require the “predominant” pipe coating of segments as part of the submittal process. API and AOPL request that PHMSA incorporate the proposed definition of “predominant” as stated in Section I.F of these comments. Further, PHMSA should provide a definition of “effectively coated.”

API and AOPL have also previously noted that PHMSA’s terminology for pipe coating method departs from the coating terminology utilized by pipeline operators. To accommodate for the extensive remapping and synchronization of terms, API and AOPL request that PHMSA implement this requirement in Phase 3, not in Phase 2, as proposed. API and AOPL agree with the inclusion of this information on the PIMMA website only.

17. Facility Response Plan

In the revised Notice, PHMSA proposes that operators submit the Facility Response Plan control number and sequence number for applicable liquid pipeline segments³⁵. API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA clarified that it seeks only the plan number, not the entire plan. API and AOPL agree that operators will be able to provide the Facility Response Plan number in Phase 1, and that the information should be maintained on the PIMMA website.

18. Year and Pressure of Original and Last Pressure Test

In the Notice, PHMSA proposes to collect data on a pipeline’s original and most recent hydrostatic test years and pressures³⁶. PHMSA indicates that this information will be used for pipeline risk calculations and to verify a pipeline's integrity. Pressure test data can vary greatly from operator to operator and from test to test, even on the same line. Because of this variability and the fact that obtaining such information would be overly burdensome, API and AOPL continue to request that PHMSA only require the year of the most recent pressure test in the NPMS system. Should PHMSA proceed with collecting this information, API and AOPL request that PHMSA provide an “unknown” option for the original year of the pressure test.

API requests clarification on whether or not this information is required for grandfathered (natural gas) pipelines. Further, PHMSA should only require this information for pipelines operating at \geq 20% SMYS, as MOP or MAOP is not collected on pipelines operating beneath that pressure. PHMSA should also clarify that the original pressure test data is requested in Phase

³³ Id. at 52090

³⁴ Id.

³⁵ Id.

³⁶ Id.

3 and the last pressure test data in Phase 1. This is not clear in Section V of the revised Notice. Lastly, API and AOPL agree with PHMSA that the data should only be available on the PIMMA website.

19. Abandoned Pipeline

In the revised Notice, PHMSA proposes that all hazardous liquid pipelines abandoned after the effective date of the Information Collection be submitted for inclusion in the NPMS³⁷. So long as this requirement is applied prospectively only, to lines abandoned after the effective date of the final information collection, then API and AOPL agree that this attribute can be incorporated into the GIS system in Phase 1. API and AOPL also support including this information in the NPMS public viewer in order to help bring awareness to the public that a pipeline exists in the community.

20. Pump and Compressor Stations

In the Notice, PHMSA proposes that operators submit a geospatial point file containing the locations of pump stations³⁸. API and AOPL do have reservations with providing the exact location of such vital infrastructure. Pump stations were one of the attributes that PHMSA specifically excluded from NPMS due to security considerations. Concerns with the vulnerability of energy infrastructure have become more acute since the emergency response handout was released. A targeted attack on pump stations could potentially disrupt entire pipeline systems and cause widespread harm.

API and AOPL appreciate that PHMSA provided a level of protection for a number of attributes that presented security concerns in the original proposed information collection request. API and AOPL acknowledge that the location of pump and compressor stations is necessary for effective emergency response planning; however, API and AOPL urge PHMSA to categorize this data as an SSI element. Also, API and AOPL respectfully request that PHMSA clarify the intended level of security for this element. Section III of the revised ICR indicates that this element will be protected under PIMMA, while Section IV states that the data will be protected as SSI. API and AOPL urge PHMSA to classify this information as SSI. API and AOPL agree that this information can be provided in Phase 1.

21. Mainline Block Valve Locations

In the Notice, PHMSA proposes that operators submit a geospatial point file containing the locations of mainline block valves, the type of valves and the type of valve operators³⁹. In the initial comments, API and AOPL stressed that security risks have only increased since the inception of NPMS, and therefore provisions should not be implemented that would abandon those precautions. In the revised Notice, PHMSA appears to indicate that mainline block valves will be classified as SSI. If that understanding is correct, API and AOPL appreciate PHMSA's efforts, and merely ask that PHMSA clarify the process by which government agencies will

³⁷ Id. at 5290-91

³⁸ Id. at 5291

³⁹ Id.

demonstrate their SSI-compliant status to PHMSA. API and AOPL agree with that this information can be collected in Phase 2.

API and AOPL also seek clarification on whether or not double gate valves will be added to the attribute list and whether they can be categorized as “gate valves.”

22. Storage Field Locations and Type of Storage

PHMSA proposes that operators submit a geospatial polygon file containing the locations of and type of gas storage fields used in interstate gas transmission systems⁴⁰. Since PHMSA’s jurisdiction over storage fields varies and is based upon the configuration of such storage facilities, API requests that PHMSA not pursue this information reporting requirement, as it would seek information on assets that are not within the scope of its regulatory authority. In addition, disclosure of storage field locations raises proprietary concerns, particularly when coupled with disclosure of detailed information about the commodity.

API continues to request that PHMSA not pursue requiring collection of this attribute; given the security and proprietary concerns and further, that there has been no demonstration that such information is needed to improve pipeline safety.

23. Breakout Tanks

In the Notice, PHMSA proposes to require the submission of breakout tank data⁴¹. API and AOPL believe that breakout tank location can be integrated into GIS systems in Phase 1. Given that disclosure of breakout tank location would show the precise area where large quantities of liquids commodity is stored, and consequently elevate the security risks of those locations, API and AOPL request that breakout tank locations only be included on the PIMMA website and not in the public viewer as proposed.

⁴⁰ Id.

⁴¹ Id.

IV. Conclusion

API and AOPL appreciate the opportunity to comment on the NPMS changes being considered by PHMSA and request that PHMSA modify the proposed Information Collection consistent with the comments contained herein.

Respectfully submitted,



Robin Rorick
Midstream, Group Director
American Petroleum Institute
1220 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005



Andrew J. Black
President and CEO
Association of Oil Pipe Lines
1808 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

