

Department of Public Safety  
State of Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety

Notice of Intent to Grant a Waiver to CenterPoint Energy Resources Corporation  
Subject: Gas Transmission Pipeline Integrity Management Reassessment Intervals

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MNOPS), pursuant to Minnesota Statute 299F.57, Subdivision 5, intends to grant a waiver concerning the frequency of pipeline integrity reassessments conducted by CenterPoint Energy Resources Corporation (CPE) on certain natural gas transmission pipeline facilities jurisdictional to 49 CFR Part 192. [74 mile Metro Belt Line System; segments MBLN, MBLNW, MBLSW, LYNDAL and MBLC; located in Hennepin County, Minnesota]

SUMMARY:

CenterPoint has filed a request with the MNOPS for a special permit to accelerate replacement of portions of the pipeline [21 .4 miles of the Metro Belt Line High Consequence Area (HCA) segments] instead of performing pipeline reassessments as required by the federal regulations of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), 49 C.F.R. §192.939.

This waiver would allow for an accelerated replacement of the pipeline segments in or near High Consequence Areas to be completed by 2020. Without the waiver, replacement would be completed in 2030. Based on previous activities under the CPE Transmission Integrity Management Plan and Distribution Integrity Management Plan, these facilities have been identified for replacement. Rather than reassessing these pipeline segments as required by regulation, accelerated replacement will better safeguard and improve public safety.

Details and documentation regarding the special permit application are available online at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ops/>

DATES:

Written comments will be accepted at the address below until 4:30 P.M. on Monday, September 29, 2014.

Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety  
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 147  
St. Paul, MN 55101-5147  
Phone: (651) 201-7230  
e-mail: [dps.mnops.response@state.mn.us](mailto:dps.mnops.response@state.mn.us)

A public meeting/ hearing is scheduled at the address below from 3 to 4:30 P.M. on Friday, September 26, 2014.

State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Room: 300 South  
St. Paul, MN 55155

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The scope of the special permit involves a portion of the CPE Metro Beltline system. The entire system is constructed of 74 miles of 20" and 24" steel pipeline. 61 miles of legacy pipeline segments are scheduled for replacement. The legacy segments are generally constructed with mechanical compression style joints. The waiver applies to 21.4 miles of pipeline located in High Consequence Areas (HCA). The entire beltline system is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota and its surrounding suburbs.

Integrity Management (IM) regulations require reassessment of natural gas transmission pipelines under 49 CFR Part 192.939. IM requires natural gas transmission pipelines operating below 30 percent specified minimum yield strength to establish reassessment intervals by an allowable reassessment method not to exceed 7 years.

Mechanical couplings are prone to having issues which can result in leakage. PHMSA has advised that events concerning failures of mechanical couplings raise concerns about safety in pipeline systems. These couplings can fail when there is inadequate restraint for the potential stresses on the joined pipes, when the couplings are incorrectly installed or supported, or when the coupling components degrade over time.

A waiver from the requirements of § 192.939 would allow CPE to initiate an accelerated replacement program for pipeline segments. Accelerated replacement will reduce risk and improve public safety. The Metro Beltline system configuration and the construction season make it infeasible to complete reassessments and accelerate replacement line. The proposed accelerated plan would shorten the replacement by 10 years with completion in 2020 as opposed to 2030.

A condition of the waiver will require CPE to perform additional preventative and mitigative activities to maintain an equivalent or enhanced level of safety. This will be comprised of additional surveys, periodic reporting and other operations and maintenance activities. MNOPS plans to conduct additional inspections throughout the duration of the special permit.

The proposed effective date of the waiver is December 1, 2014. The waiver is proposed to remain in effect for seven (7) years, or until such time that circumstances indicate alternate safety measures are warranted. The waiver status will be reviewed with the operator on an annual basis, as part of routine MNOPS inspections.

Dated this 15th day of September, 2014

Ramona L. Dohman, Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Public Safety