Written Testimony of
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On Behalf of the American Gas Association
and
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Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Hearing on Pipeline Safety Reauthorization
May 11, 2000

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Dick Reiten, President and CEO of NW Natural. NW Natural is a 141 year-old company headquartered in Portland, Oregon. We are a natural gas local distribution company serving more than 500,000 customers in Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington.

I am here testifying on behalf of the American Gas Association (AGA) and the American Public Gas Association (APGA). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the essential matter of public safety and the nation's natural gas distribution system.

AGA is the national trade association representing over 180 investor-owned natural gas utilities collectively serving almost 60 million consumers. The APGA represents 480 of the 1000 municipally owned gas companies across the nation. . They include municipal gas distribution systems, public utility districts, county districts, and other public agencies that own and operate natural gas distribution facilities. Together we represent the companies that deliver virtually all of the natural gas to consumers in the United States.

Our industry is a growing business as 70% of all new households choose to have natural gas service. Our fuel is primarily domestically produced, reasonably priced and environmentally friendly. Delivering natural gas safely to our customers is essential for us to continue conducting our business. Our industry's commitment to safety is borne out each year through the National Transportation Safety Board's annual statistics. Delivery of natural gas by pipeline is consistently the safest mode of transportation.

Although State pipeline safety authorities regulate natural gas utilities, our State governments routinely adopt the federal safety standards as minimum standards. Therefore, what happens in Congress affects our companies. We are very concerned that any perceptions or allegations that we are not devoted to safety be addressed and dispelled. Utilities are the "faces" of the natural gas industry. Our companies and facilities are located within the communities we serve and the public knows us well. We participate in many community programs and charitable activities. The health of the community is the health of our company.

Natural Gas Systems are Different From Liquid Systems

As the legislative process moves forward, there are important differences between the natural gas and liquid pipeline systems that Congress needs to recognize and understand when crafting new requirements. While many may unintentionally link all "pipelines" together, there are significant differences between the liquid transmission, natural gas transmission and natural gas distribution systems. Each industry faces different challenges, operating conditions and consequences of ruptures.

The federal regulations recognize the differences between the three types of systems and different sets of rules have been created for each. 49 CFR Part 192 sets out the regulations for natural gas transmission and distribution and the rules discriminate between the two. 49 CFR Part 195 sets out the regulations for liquid transmission lines.

Transmission systems are generally long and straight pipelines are large diameter and operate at high volumes and high pressures. Distribution systems are constructed in pipe configurations that look like grids or web, use smaller diameter pipe and operate at low volumes and low pressures.

Natural gas moves a single product, methane, by periodic compression along the pipelines. Natural gas transmission lines take our product from the producing areas to our towns where the utility receives it and distributes the product to homes and businesses. Liquid transmission pipelines move commodities such as crude oil, gasoline, heating oil, jet fuel, diesel, propane and other liquids. These products are physically pumped through the pipeline to distribution centers or end-users.

The Leading Cause of Accidents- Third Party Damage

The leading cause of accidents on distribution pipelines is excavators unintentionally striking our lines, commonly third party damage. Year after year these strikes cause over 60% of the total ruptures on utilities *and the vast majority of injuries and fatalities*. While we work very hard to provide for safety we can't do it alone. Excavators and other underground utility operators need to work with us to provide for safe and reliable natural gas service.

This Committee recognized the problem last Congress and created a federal program to reward States with strong one-call laws. These laws require excavators to call before they dig and for utilities to accurately mark their underground facilities. The Committee also directed DOT to gather all stakeholders together to produce a "best practices" study. This effort was completed last year and we are working to help implement the best practices to improve field operations of one-call systems. The DOT/stakeholder effort is called "Path Forward" and utilities are participating fully. We thank you for your work on one-call and hope to find additional ways to improve this important safety tool.

Distribution Safety Initiatives

Natural gas utilities are working with federal and state governments on a variety of new safety initiatives. These include the creation of a voluntary data gathering effort on performance of older plastic pipe; pipeline system integrity regulations; operator fatigue surveys; utility transmission mapping and many other efforts. We view these as investments in our customers and the communities we serve.

In addition to our voluntary efforts, LDCs must comply with a regulatory program that pays stringent attention to design, construction, maintenance, operation, replacement, inspection and monitoring practices. We continually refine our safety practices. Combined, natural gas utilities spend an estimated $3.4 billion each year in safety related activities. Roughly half of this money is spent in compliance with federal and state regulations. The other half is voluntarily spent to ensure that our systems are safe and that the communities we serve are protected.

Over the past ten years we have seen the rate of incidents on natural gas distribution lines decrease by 25% while the volume of natural gas nationwide has increased by 40%. Our industry has a tremendous incentive to maintain our excellent safety record. Safety is a matter of corporate policy and a top priority for every company. These policies are carried out in specific and characteristic ways. Each company employs safety professionals, provides on-going employee evaluation and safety training, conducts rigorous system inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement, distributes public safety information, and complies with a wide range of federal and state safety regulations and requirements. Individual company efforts are supplemented by collaborative activities in the safety committees of regional and national trade organizations. Examples of these groups include the American Gas Association, the American Public Gas Association and the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America.

Collaboration and Professional Organizations

Company safety professionals also participate in a variety of professional organizations dedicated to advancing the practice of work place and public safety. A partial list of the leading groups include the following: National Association of Corrosion Engineers (NACE), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), National Safety Council (NSC), American Petroleum Institute (API), American Welding Society (AWS), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), Transportation Safety Institute (TSI), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE).

Research and Development

Utilities also contribute to research and development through such organizations as the Gas Research Institute and Institute of Gas Technology where advanced safety devices and technologies are designed and tested. Interstate pipeline and local distribution companies invest millions in non-construction safety-specific activities. We are always seeking better technologies to use in our safety activities.

Senate Legislative Proposals

Legislative proposals have been made to address a number of concerns that are contained in the three pipeline safety reauthorization bills before the Senate – S. 2438, S. 2409 and S. 2004. Allow me to comment broadly upon some general themes. More specific comments on each bill are included with this testimony as attachments. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the various proposals and to suggest specific language changes.

Operator Qualification

Concerns have been raised about expertise and abilities of the natural gas industry's workforce. While we have maintained that our excellent safety record shows that our employees are qualified, we are fully participating in the new Operator Qualification rule that was issued in August 1999. For the first time operators will be required document this qualification in writing. Utilities' written qualification plans must be completed by April 2001 and are subject to audit by our state regulatory authorities. In the event of an accident this information is subject to

discovery in court.

Some have suggested that we focus on training and certification. The current rule encompasses training and the employees are actually certified by the company under an enforceable federal rule. Some may question self-certification but the fact remains that operators are "on the hook" and responsible for their decisions and actions. (Please see Attachment #4 for more details)

System Integrity Rule

The Administration has proposed legislative language that tracks a pipeline system integrity rule for the liquid transmission industry. The language as written does not discriminate between natural gas and liquids and includes such language as a requirement to use "best achievable technology". Natural gas distribution companies are actively working with the Office of Pipeline Safety to develop a rule that can be applied to our systems. It is evident that the system integrity rule for natural gas is going to be very different than the one for liquid transmission. As mentioned before, our systems are very different.

Unlike most liquid transmission lines, the physical characteristics of distribution lines preclude the use of internal inspection devices in many cases. Distribution companies to maintain their lines utilize other means of inspection. Regulations require utilities to perform a greater level of safety activities in more highly populated areas within our systems called "business districts". This is similar to the Class location approach used for natural gas transmission lines.

Public Education/Community Right To Know

We support the public's right to know and understand how and where the natural gas system operates. An informed public will be better able to contribute to accomplishing the objectives of improved public safety. In many instances, improving public information is a cooperative effort between the natural gas industry and communities served. Whether new efforts extend or improve existing programs, utilities will participate in their development and implementation. However, we ask that our unique relationship with our state regulatory agencies and local communities is recognized and any new requirements are crafted in a way that takes this into consideration.

We also support advanced preparation and training for fire, police and emergency service personnel who are often first to arrive at a hazardous site. It is critical for them to know and understand the nature of a natural gas incident and how best to manage it.

State Jurisdiction for Interstate Pipelines

Utilities are concerned that different requirements imposed by States on interstate transmission could lead to supply disruption to our customers. Uninterrupted flow is critical in natural gas systems. If interstate flows are interrupted, the ability of a utility to maintain adequate pipeline pressure to serve customers is immediately impaired. In such situations we must manually turn off service to individual customers. When flows resume, we must then restore service and re-light each gas appliance in every affected home and business. The process is a long and tedious one, and is obviously not without its own risks. Unnecessary disruptions should be avoided.

Summary

In summary, the natural gas industry is proud of its safety record. Natural gas has become the recognized fuel of choice by both citizens and the federal government. This customer growth and confidence also bears with it an added responsibility. As such, public and employee safety is a top priority for natural gas utilities. We will continue our ongoing efforts to operate safe and reliable systems and to strengthen one-call laws and systems in every State.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to present our views on the important matter of pipeline safety. We look forward to working with federal, state and local authorities, as well as within our industry, to achieve the highest possible level of public and employee safety.

Attachment #1

S. 2438

The King and Tsiorvas Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2000

By the American Gas Association and
The American Public Gas Association
May 11, 2000

IG Report

Section 2 requires the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) to respond to the recommendations of the Inspector General's report on the Office of Pipeline Safety. Some of the other provisions of S. 2438 go to areas mentioned in the IG report. Any inconsistencies should be rectified.

Operator Training Plans

Section 4 would require distribution companies to develop written training plans and submit them to the Department of Transportation. Normally, distribution companies work directly with their state regulatory authorities. States do adopt the federal standards as their minimum safety standards. However, the state pipeline safety inspectors inspect and enforce the rules on distribution companies. There are approximately 1200 natural gas utilities nationwide. We suggest that the requirements be changed to indicate that utilities will work with their state regulators when developing their final operator qualification plan that includes training.

All companies are now implementing the new federal Operator Qualification rule that was issued in August of 1999. The new rule requires companies to ensure that their safety related employee force is qualified to do their jobs and respond to abnormal circumstances. Companies must document this qualification in writing and this documentation is subject to audit by the regulatory authorities. Training is one of the tools used in qualification but not an end unto itself. An employee can go through a training program but not necessarily demonstrate the skills, knowledge and abilities to receive qualification. The focus should be on having a qualified workforce. (Please see Attachment #4 for further detail.)

Pipeline Integrity Inspection Program

Section 5 requires the Secretary to establish rules for inspection in "high-density population areas" and "unusually sensitive areas". Under the current statute the terms are defined whereby "high-density population areas" cover both natural gas and liquid pipelines and "unusually sensitive areas" cover only liquid pipelines. The language should be clarified to make this distinction. Unusually sensitive areas are designed for environmental protection measures. Natural gas ruptures do not result in environmental pollution.

Public Education and Community Right to Know

Section 7 requires distribution companies to engage in a number of public education programs including informing the public about how to use the one-call programs. We strongly support better knowledge of the use of one call or "call-before-you-dig" programs. Almost 60% of the accidents on natural gas distribution lines are caused by third parties unintentionally digging into the lines.

We already participate in many public education and outreach programs with state and local official and emergency response, police and fire personnel. One section requires distribution companies to "advise municipalities, school districts, businesses and residents of pipeline facility locations." Does this mean that utilities are be required to directly contact every citizen, public official and business owner in the cities we serve regarding the location of our lines? It is far more effective to notify citizens that they need to call before they excavate or report any gas leaks directly to the utility. Information sent directly to individuals is often ignored. It is more effective to repeatedly put out your safety messages through various forms of advertisement. Natural gas utilities operate within the communities they serve and constantly interact with them.

The section also requires that companies provide maps to the municipalities where their pipes are located. Unlike long-line transmission pipelines that are relatively straight and are mainly located in rural areas, natural gas utilities are, by their nature, located in populated areas. We are concerned that releasing the location of our utility facilities may represent a security problem. A city could be seriously disrupted if such information fell into the wrong hands. A requirement to duplicate our maps and provide them to all municipalities also represents a significant storage issue for the municipal authorities. It is much more workable to simply require that company's supply any maps to the state or local authorities if they request them.

Authorization of Appropriations

Section 12 authorizes an increase in overall appropriations including an increased draw from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. The majority of the appropriations are funded through user fees assessed on transmission lines. Natural gas utilities absorb a portion of these fees as part of the transportation costs and these costs are passed to the consumer. It is therefore important that any increased fees be wisely spent and not unduly burden the natural gas consumer. It is important to note that companies provide for the actual safe operations of their pipelines.

Attachment #2

S. 2409

The Pipeline Safety and Community Protection Act of 2000

By the American Gas Association and
The American Public Gas Association
May 11, 2000

Additional Pipeline Protections

Section 2 requires the Secretary to establish and implement a pipeline integrity program. The language also calls requirements to use "best achievable technology". If accepted the requirement would likely mean that local distribution companies (LDCs) would constantly be out of compliance and subject to fines. What is "achievable" is unclear. At what price is it "achieved". The language also appears to track the ongoing integrity rule for liquid pipelines. The discussions and issues surrounding the natural gas rule indicate that, because of the differences in the two products and systems, that it could be very different from the liquid rule. As the rules are ongoing, Congress should not confuse the matter with unnecessary legislative language. The natural gas industry is participating in developing the rule for our industry in good faith and these efforts should not be undercut.

Community Right to Know and Emergency Preparedness

Section 3 requires companies to promote knowledge about one-call notification systems and other possible hazards. Companies strongly support continued efforts to educate the public regarding one-call and how to respond to a natural gas leak. LDCs also would be required to work to ensure that emergency response authorities be educated to respond to natural gas leaks and other information.

Enforcement

Section 4 would expand the Department of Transportation's (DOT) enforcement authority and penalties. These provisions are unnecessary as the Secretary already has very wide enforcement authorities. The section also would broaden the existing citizen's suit provisions in the law. We question why this is necessary. Pipelines need to focus on safety activities not court cases.

Underground Damage Prevention

Section 5 would make it misdemeanors for an excavator to hit a natural gas line. We support strong enforcement for those that continually refuse to use one-call systems or wantonly endanger themselves or the pipelines. However, it is more important that an excavator report a strike, even if it relieves him of a penalty. One of the most serious problems is excavation activity damaging pipes and then reburying the pipe.

Improved Data and Data Availability

Section 7 would establish a national data depository for information other than incident related data. DOT is already working with both the liquid and natural gas industries to voluntarily develop a database to help identify any trends or problems. These programs are just being implemented and should be allowed to continue. There is no need to spend user fee dollars to create another depository.

Enhanced Investigation Authorities

Section 8 would allow the Secretary to collect "extraordinary expenses of incident investigation". Currently, the National Transportation Safety Board investigates accidents on LDCs when there is a death or injury. State authorities also investigate LDC accidents. We are concerned that there is no definition of the expenses or caps for an agency, that's primary role is to create safety regulations and to enforce them, not investigate accidents.

International Authority

Section 9 would allow DOT to support international efforts to share information. Once again LDCs fail to see the benefit to the public safety. The U.S. has one of the best pipeline systems in the world. If other countries benefit from our expertise they should foot the bill.

Support for Innovative Technology Development

Section 11 would direct DOT to take appropriations (user fees) and participate in the development of alternative technologies for identifying outside force damage. LDCs have for many years supported the development of technologies used in preventing or identifying outside force damage. If Congress desires to have DOT involved in research then the projects should be useful and, where possible, be in conjunction with industry supported efforts.

Authorization of Appropriations

Section 12 would authorize DOT's FY2001 budget request. The request asks for a 43% increase in user fees. Any additional funding for the Office of Pipeline Safety should come from increased drawdown of both the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund and the OPS "reserve fund". $5 million of the requested increase is for a state grant program for states with one-call programs. These funds are authorized to come from general revenues and should. One-call systems protect all underground facilities, excavators and the public in general. Solely pipeline user fees should not fund the grants program. The request for full 50% funding for the annual state pipeline safety programs is acceptable but the level should be $15 million not $17 million.

Attachment #3

S. 2409

The Pipeline Safety Act of 2000

By the American Gas Association and
The American Public Gas Association
May 11, 2000

Expanded State Authority

Section 3 proposes to give State's the authority to promulgate and enforce regulations for interstate transmission

pipelines. Varying state regulations on interstate transmission lines could result in requirements that cause the pipeline to interrupt service to local distribution companies (LDC) serving a different state. This could cause disruption of residential and business services that would require LDCs to individually visit them one by one to re-light their pilot lights for safety reasons.

New Federal Requirements

Section 5 would require that pipeline facilities capable of accommodating an internal inspection device be inspected every 5 years and that an external inspection occur every 5 years if the Secretary determines that the technology exists and is reliable. This provision would mandate internal inspection of any part of the nation's 1.7 million-mile distribution system, including service lines if the line could accommodate the same.
Distribution lines are normally smaller in diameter and lower pressure and internal inspection devices are not routinely used. Other inspection means are much more prevalent.

The section also would require external inspections. In order to externally inspect the lines they would have to be entirely excavated every 5 years. The cost of these provisions would be enormous; the disruption to citizens and the public in urban areas by excavation every 5 years would be extreme. Basically, the every city's streets served by natural gas would be cut and excavated on a continuing basis.

Enhanced Qualifications of Pipeline Operators

Section 6 would require that employees of pipeline facilities be tested and certified as qualified by the Secretary of Transportation. The industry is in the midst of implementation of DOT's Operator Qualification Rule. Under the rule companies must ensure that employees performing safety related jobs be qualified to perform their jobs and to respond to emergency and unusual circumstances. Companies must also keep records of an employee's qualification and such records are subject to audit by the Office of Pipeline Safety and, in the case of distribution companies, the state pipeline safety inspectors. The rule was created through two-one half years of hard work in a negotiated rulemaking that was facilitated by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Study and Report

Section 7 requires studies on internal and external inspection devices, burial depth, automatic failsafe mechanisms and equalizing priorities between natural gas and liquid pipelines. Numerous studies exist on many issues important to pipeline operation. Prior to expending user fees to conduct additional studies, Congress should avail themselves to the existing body of work. If an area of interest has not been covered, a study could be conducted.

Authorization of Appropriations

Section 8 would increase user fees $81 million for FY2001 and accelerating to $108 million by FY 2005. Currently user fees total a little over $30 million. Natural gas consumers eventually absorb the majority of user fees assessed on pipelines. Diverting pipeline safety dollars away from field activities to the federal government does not increase safety. The Office of Pipeline Safety's mission is to promulgate regulations, inspect and enforce. Pipelines are responsible for operating their systems safety 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Collectively, natural gas transmission and distribution spend approximately $4 billion annually on safety related activities. Our excellent safety record bears out our industry's commitment to safety.

Attachment #4

PIPELINE OPERATOR QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING BRIEFING PAPER

By the American Gas Association and

Background

The Accountable Pipeline Safety and Partnership Act of 1996 amended the statute to broaden a requirement for testing and certification of operations personnel, law required DOT to adopt regulations requiring that *"all individuals who operate and maintain pipeline facilities shall be qualified to operate and maintain the pipeline facilities*" and *"shall address the ability to recognize and react appropriately to abnormal operating conditions that may indicate a dangerous situation or a condition exceeding design limits*" (49 U.S.C. 60102(a)).

The Department of Transportation issued a final Operator Qualification Rule on August 27, 1999. Companies are currently required to have their written qualification plan completed by April 27, 2001 (49 CFR Part 192, §192.805 Qualification Program).

Qualification Encompasses Training

Rather than only requiring training to an individual, the DOT Operator Qualification (OQ) rule was designed to focus on ensuring that an individual is qualified. This means a candidate for qualification must have the knowledge, skills, experience and demonstrated ability to perform **covered tasks**.

A **task is covered** by the OQ rule if it meets all four of the criteria below:
Performed on a pipeline facility,
It is an operations and maintenance task,
It is performed as a requirement of the pipeline safety code (49 CFR Part 192), and
Affects the operation or integrity of the pipeline.

Qualification is the process of acquiring and demonstrating the ability to perform a covered task. ***Training*** is an enabling process that helps an individual acquire only the knowledge and skills to perform a covered task. But training alone may not be enough; after training, the individual must gain the experience and demonstrate the ability to perform a covered task in order to be qualified. So, the OQ rule is broader in scope than a rule that only emphasizes training.

An individual who acquired the ability to perform a task by regularly performing it prior to the effective date of this rule may be evaluated and determined to be qualified in accordance with evaluation methods and criteria established by the operator.

An individual who will be performing a new task must also acquire the ability. This may be by training or any other appropriate means. The rule is flexible as to how this is to be done. Under the rule the individual must be evaluated to verify their ability to perform the covered task.

In the event an individual is not able to qualify (demonstrate through evaluation their ability to perform a covered task), the operator may elect to help that individual acquire the ability through training or other appropriate means. After acquiring the ability the employee may be periodically evaluated to verify his/her qualification.

Recognizing that the great majority of the of individuals in gas utilities are already qualified to perform covered tasks, the OQ rule was designed to be flexible as to the type of process needed to acquire the qualification, emphasizing also those areas

where additional efforts are need by the operator in order to improve the safety of its pipeline system operations and maintenance.

During the negotiated rulemaking that took place in developing the OQ rule, it was determined that a national qualification program conducted by the Research and Special Programs Administration, another federal agency, or a state agency, would not be an appropriate or practical response to the 1996 Act. While such a system would offer the advantages of national consistency, including the ability of contractor employees to work for different operators under a single qualification regime, the complexity and cost of administering such a system, coupled with the difficulty of devising a system appropriate for the wide variations in the operations and maintenance procedures and facilities of individual operators, precluded this from being an effective option. It was determined the mandate would best be met by a non- prescriptive, performance based regulation requiring each operator to have, a written program for the qualification of individuals. This would allow operator programs to be tailored for some to their unique operations and practices, without precluding others, including contractors, from joining each other to agree on specific common aspects of qualification.

A straightforward, performance oriented rule was developed that applies to both gas and hazardous liquid pipeline operators. It contains five sections that include the scope, definitions, requirements of the qualification program, record-keeping and specifies the schedule for compliance.

In the requirements section (49 CFR Part 192, §192.805 Qualification Program), the OQ rule requires operators to identify covered tasks, to carry out evaluation of individuals, and to identify periods of reevaluation of individuals along with the corresponding covered tasks for which they have to be qualified. It also has provisions for changes in covered tasks, and what is required in special situations involving individuals that are not or may not be qualified.

The OQ rule also includes a requirement for evaluation of individuals. An integral part of these evaluation methods is the requirement that training be performed if an employee fails the qualification test.

Acceptable evaluation methods are subject to certain restrictions and include,
written exam, oral exam, work performance history, observation during:
performance on the job,
on the job training,
simulations,
or other forms of assessment.

Many operators in industry have been carrying out training and qualification of their workforce in connection with operation of their systems. They may not necessarily have their plans or carry out qualification in the format that the OQ rule requires. Operators have been given 18 months to prepare written plans for compliance with the rule and an added 18 months to comply by completing the qualification of their workforce.

Critical Tasks Are Further Covered

The rule also recognizes that there are specific critical tasks with a high level of specialized ability that may have to be performed, such as welding of a pipeline, fusion/joining of plastic pipes, or ensuring corrosion protection of steel piping. These tasks are already prescribed in detail the existing pipeline safety code. They are left intact by the OQ rule, with the added requirement that the individual qualified to perform them must also have the ability to recognize and react to abnormal conditions that may be encountered in connection with these tasks.

OQ Efforts Are Under Way

Preparations for the qualification process are well under way within a great majority of the gas industry. Taking advantage of similarity in some aspects of their operations and maintenance activities, some companies have joined together to develop common covered tasks or processes for qualification. Other companies are working by themselves. Both are supported by a cadre of recognized experts in instruction and training developing additional specialized teaching curriculums and evaluation materials and methods. The great majority of the operators are working with their state regulators to develop measurement criteria to verify compliance with the rule.

Let the DOT OQ Rule Run Its Course

Requiring operators to submit plans for training within six months of the passage of Reauthorization, could result in the premature submittal of plans in a wide variety of formats. Because of the large variation in the scope of programs in effect by various operators, this would be making it very difficult to evaluate the adequacy of the operator qualification programs in existence and under development today. This could in turn lead regulators and legislators to the wrong conclusions. Alternatively, imposing more prescriptive requirements under the above deadline would result in inefficient and wasteful use of resources by the stakeholders involved, without added benefit to safety. Therefore, it is suggested that implementation of the DOT OQ rule be allowed to run its course.