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October 20, 2023

Mr. Jeffrey R. Gaudiosi, Esq.
Executive Secretary
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: Docket No. 23-07-21, Regulations for Gas Pipeline Safety, CNG and SCG's Written Comments Concerning PURA's Proposed Regulations

Dear Mr. Gaudiosi:

The Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation and The Southern Connecticut Gas Company (collectively, the "Companies") are in receipt of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority's ("PURA" or the "Authority") Notice of Intent, dated August 21, 2023 (the "Notice"), which identified a set of proposed regulations (the "Proposed Regulations") for gas pipeline safety standards. The Authority's Notice recognized the need to update existing regulations and further invited interested persons to provide written comments on the Proposed Regulations on or before October 20, 2023.

The Companies' staff have reviewed the Proposed Regulations, in conjunction with the other Connecticut natural gas Operators, to identify potential impacts to daily gas operations. The Companies commend PURA and the Gas Pipeline Safety Unit (the "GPSU") staff on the efforts and outcome of such an extensive review and publication of the Proposed Regulations, which are intended to increase the safety and reliability of Connecticut's natural gas distribution systems.

The following is a list of the Companies' comments and concerns with the Proposed Regulations. The Companies' written comments recommended language changes to achieve the stated goals of the Authority. The Companies are committed to working with PURA and the GPSU to align Connecticut regulations with state law and federal safety standards and the common goal of enhancing pipeline safety and gas system reliability.

I. Written Comments

A. <u>Timeframe, Cost Implementation, and Compliance</u>

The scope of work required to meet the desired outcome of the Proposed Regulations is significant. The Companies' comments highlight implementation timeframes that are of concern and suggest practical alternatives that, for example, incorporate risk-based prioritization schedules such that the highest degree of pipeline safety value is realized as quickly as possible. Timeframes to implement certain aspects of these Proposed Regulations are very much dependent on a multitude of factors, the most significant of which are explained in detail below.

The availability of qualified personnel, be they field personnel from the represented workforce, contractor personnel who conduct various construction or maintenance activities, or engineering personnel, will have a direct and profound impact on the ability of Operators to execute the work required by the proposed regulations. Expanding the workforce to enable Operators to execute the proposed work activities will take extensive time to recruit, hire, onboard, train, and qualify individuals as required by role. Additionally, the need to review and possibly amend the associated labor union agreements and contractor contracts would add to the time it would take to realize the workforce needed for the Proposed Regulations.

The modification of existing Standards and operating procedures will be considerable; in some instances, new Standards and procedures will need to be developed. The modifications and additions will require research, alterations, publication, training, and in many cases inclusion into a modified Operator Qualification Plan ("OQ Plan") that is specific to the Companies' Standards and written procedures. Time will be required for such items as revising OQ Plans to align with Covered Task requirements, setting up processes and systems for training, documentation of training, and tracking evaluator and trainer requirements, implementing new performance evaluations, setting up program effectiveness plans and systems to track effectiveness metrics, implementing 100% pass requirements for AOC questions, and setting up and implementing change management plans.

With this, should global supply chain challenges persist, this will have an impact on the ability of Operators to readily procure the needed equipment and materials, particularly for specialty gas equipment and training programs. This again increases the timeframe needed for the work required by the proposed regulations.

The Companies emphasize these points, as the safe and effective execution of a work plan to comply with the Proposed Regulations requires reasonable implementation timeframes and operational flexibility, as each Operator is impacted to varying degrees. There will likely be common initiatives that could be undertaken in a collaborative format (such as recommended risk-based studies) and there will also be numerous initiatives that are company-specific. While NGA members are committed to collaborating, where feasible, on studies and initiatives to allow for transparent implementation and efficient enforcement, timelines to implement company-specific components will vary depending on the scale of the company and their status relative to the required end state.

As many of these Proposed Regulations become effective immediately upon adoption, specific assurances are requested as to when the GPSU will implement enforcement of any newly adopted regulation.

The Companies also note that the recoverable costs required to comply with the Proposed Regulations will include significant capital investment and incremental, ongoing operation and maintenance costs to best ensure compliance with any resulting revision to the regulations.

B. Sec. 16-280b-A5 Effective Dates and Applicability

Proposed Regulations:

Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective immediately with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16- 280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies are concerned that if regulations are effective immediately, the Companies will not have sufficient time to comply with the requirements. The written comments provided in Section I.A. above outline the Companies' most significant concerns relative to implementation timeframes and costs.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies respectfully recommend that the Authority consider revising language to identify a specific date of implementation or enforcement, and consider including the following exception: **Sec. 16-280b-A25(d);**

Companies' Recommended New Language:

Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective **January 1, 2026**, with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: **16-280b-A25(d),** 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16- 280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

C. Sec. 16-280b-A20 (4). Notifications

Proposed Regulation:

Each Operator shall notify the GPSU as soon as practicable but not later than 1 hour after an Operator can reasonably determine, based on information available to the Operator that any of the following involving an Operator's Pipeline Facilities have occurred:

(4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area due to Gas odor.

Companies' Written Comments:

Customer service representatives and Gas Dispatchers routinely recommend evacuation as a precautionary measure when customers smell gas. If the intent of this proposed revision is to notify GPSU of an evacuation condition deemed hazardous by qualified personnel on scene during a gas leak investigation, consider modifying the language. Also, as written, odor calls would be required to be reported to the GPSU independent of whether the investigation reveals the cause to be natural gas.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies respectfully recommend that (4) of the Proposed Regulation be rewritten as:

(4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area ***by a qualified individual or entity (e.g., Operator, First Responder),*** *due to Gas odor* ***that is confirmed to be natural gas;***

D. Sec. 16-280b-A25 (d) and (e). Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

(d) Service Regulators shall be labeled to reflect the installed interchangeable components, such as orifice size, core size and spring pressure range at the time such Service Regulators or components are changed or replaced.

(e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies are of the understanding that section (d) above is not intended to be retroactive, but only applicable to new service regulators and components changed after the adoption of any revised regulations resulting from this Docket.

Further, the Companies request a confirmation that "inspected periodically" does not require a new program, but may be done in conjunction with another program, such as the meter exchange.

Companies' Recommendations:

The Companies respectfully recommend part (d) above be included as an exclusion in 16-280(b)-A5, to identify that the labeling of service regulators to identify the installed interchangeable components appear only on new regulators and components changed after the adoption of any revised regulations resulting from this Docket.

The Companies respectfully recommend that section (e) to be rewritten as:

(e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. ***Inspections may be performed as part of an existing maintenance program (e.g., meter exchange program).*** *The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.*

E. Sec. 16-280b-A42. Customer Meters and Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, where any Service Line is installed, replaced or relocated:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be installed outdoors; and

(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be installed at the building wall.

(b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be located outdoors; and

(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be located at the building wall.

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies respectfully request that the Authority consider language changes for (a) (2). The use of "located" rather than "installed" broadens the language and allows for situations where there is an existing connection and not a new installation. Further, the replacement of the words "building wall" with "structure" broadens the language and allows for instances where there may not be building wall.

For part (b)(1), while the Companies acknowledge the benefits of all meters located at the outside wall of the structures the Companies are serving, the proposed relocation of customer meters and regulators to the outside will include the relocation and/or replacement of potentially thousands of state-of-the-art plastic and cathodically protected steel services that currently supply these inside meters and regulators. The resources required to perform these relocations, as well as the replacement non-state-of-the-art services ahead of planned DIMP replacement programs, will directly compete with the resources dedicated to the DIMP replacement programs. As such, the Companies request that any program to identify a timeline to relocate all customer meters and regulators outside be removed from the Proposed Regulations and be addressed within future rate cases, so that a formal comprehensive study of the resources required, and associated discussion of recoverable costs can be thoroughly researched to determine a potential Gas Operator specific timeline and supporting rate recovery.

Companies' Recommendations:

The Companies recommend that section (a) to be rewritten as:

(a) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, where any Service Line is installed, replaced or relocated:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be installed outdoors; and
(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be ***located*** *at the* ***structure****.*

The Companies further recommend the **removal of proposed Sec. 16-280b-A42(b)** and address the potential relocation of all customer meters and service regulators to the outside in future rate case proceedings.

F. Sec. 16-280b-A50 (a). Corrosion protective coating

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, coated steel Pipe shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies recommend that the Authority consider modifying the language to provides more specificity and eliminate those inspections which do not provide incremental public safety value.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (a) to be rewritten as:

(a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, coated steel ***mains of length greater than 20 feet and complete services greater than 1.25" in diameter*** *shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.*

G. Sec. 16-280b-A54 (c). Test Points

Proposed Regulation:

(c) A Test Point shall be added in any locations where Pipe under cathodic protection is exposed to repair a corrosion leak unless a Test Point currently exists within 500 feet of the leak.

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies note that they may have corrosion leaks on cathodically protected pipelines that were repaired decades ago. The presence of these old corrosion leak repairs is no longer relevant to the continued cathodic protection and safety of that pipeline. As such, the Companies request that the Authority consider modifying the language to indicate that this is not a retroactive requirement, but necessary only on corrosion leaks repaired on cathodically repaired pipe after any resulting regulation is implemented.

Recommendation:

The Companies recommend modifying the language of 16-280b-A54(c) to:

(c) A Test Point shall be added in any location where Pipe under cathodic protection is exposed to repair a corrosion leak ***repaired under this regulation*** *unless a Test Point currently exists within 500 feet of the leak.*

H. Sec. 16-280b-A58. Continuing Surveillance

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Continuing surveillance required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.613, as amended from time to time, shall include a review of all Pipeline Facilities to ensure compliance with Federal Regulations, State Regulations and Procedures at the following intervals:

(1) at least once each calendar year, but at intervals not exceeding 15 months in Business Districts; and

(2) at least once every 3 calendar years, but at intervals not exceeding 39 months in all other areas.

(b) Any deficiencies found during continuing surveillance shall be remediated prior to the next inspection required by subsection (a) of this section.

Companies' Written Comments:

The remediation of deficiencies identified during continuous surveillance should be prioritized not by the survey frequency but by the potential threat such deficiencies pose to the safety or reliability of the distribution system. As Operators currently have written programs to address Abnormal Operating Conditions ("AOCs") and other system deficiencies, the timelines to address these deficiencies should align with these written programs for all identified AOCs or other deficiencies.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (b) to be rewritten as:

(b) Any deficiencies found during continuing surveillance shall be remediated ***in conjunction with the Operator's written deficiency remediation program.***

I. Sec. 16-280b-A69 (e). Abandonment or Deactivation of Facilities

Proposed Regulation:

(e) Previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.

Companies' Written Comments:

The Companies recognize potential situations where the pipe has been physically disconnected but there is not a safety benefit of prohibiting the transportation of gas by the previously abandoned pipeline, thereby requiring costly replacement.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (e) to be rewritten as:

(e) ***Unless approved by the GPSU in writing****, previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.*

J. Sec. 16-280b-A76. Threat Identification

Proposed Regulation:

Not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of an alert, advisory bulletin, recommendation or similar notification from the National Transportation Safety Board, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, trade organizations, GPSU, or similar organizations, each Operator shall take appropriate action to review its Procedures and Pipeline Facilities to identify if modifications are required and shall report to the GPSU the results of the review including a timeframe for the completion of any modifications required.

Companies' Written Comments:

As there is no definition or limitation provided for the terms "trade organization" or "similar organization," in the Proposed Regulations, this regulation would require continuous monitoring of a significant number of sources to assure compliance.

Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section Sec. 16-280b-A76 to be rewritten as:

Not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of an alert, advisory bulletin, recommendation or similar notification ***by an industry authority on natural gas system matters warning of concerns related to the safety or integrity of the gas system,*** *each Operator shall take appropriate action to review its Procedures and Pipeline Facilities to identify if modifications are required and shall report to the GPSU the* ***preliminary*** *results of the review including a timeframe for the completion of any modifications required.*

K. Sec. 16-280b-B11 (b). Enclosures

Proposed Regulation:

(b) Equipment located in belowground enclosures shall be designed to continue operating normally if submerged.

Discussion:

There may be "equipment" such as telemetering in enclosures that is not designed to be submersible but would not impact the safe and reliable transportation of gas should it malfunction. The Companies do not believe that was PURA's intent of this regulation change. The Companies request that PURA consider language modification to align with the intent of this requirement as understood.

Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (b) to be rewritten as:

(b) Equipment located in belowground enclosures ***whose malfunction could directly impact the safe operation and reliability of the gas system,*** *shall be designed to continue operating normally if submerged.*

L. Sec. 16-280b-B18 (a). Cover

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with a minimum cover of 30 inches. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

Companies' Written Comments:

There are many occurrences when attaining a minimum of 30" cover for Mains will be extremely costly, where a slightly shallower, protected Main will be a viable alternative (e.g., in city intersections). The Companies recommend the Authority consider a language change to allow for situations where 30" of cover may not be feasible.

Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (a) to be rewritten as:

(a) ***Unless approved in writing by the GPSU****, Belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with a* ***nominal*** *cover of 30 inches.* ***Operators will identify methods to be taken to ensure the future integrity of that pipeline in their request to the GPSU for Mains to be installed at a cover less than 30 inches.*** *Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.*

M. Sec. 16-280b-B21. Upratings and Upgradings

Proposed Regulation

(a) Upratings and Upgradings shall meet the following requirements:

(7) The MAOP in the Pipeline(s) undergoing the uprating shall be the highest pressure obtained at the approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s). The approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s) shall be determined by system modeling. For Upgradings, the highest pressure obtained shall be no more than one pound per square inch gauge less than the MAOP.

Companies' Written Comments:

This section has a broad impact on all proposed pressure upgrades on pipelines where a previously established MAOP was established through compliance with 49 CFR 192.513 that is greater than the proposed upgraded pressures to be introduced. The proposed wording in this section does not allow for the presentation of project specific conditions and facts that should be considered before mandating a specific course of action for each proposed upgrading procedure. Considering this, the Companies request revision of the regulation to provide the Companies with the opportunity to present to the GPSU with project specific details in writing and conditions that may allow for a safe alternative to this proposed restrictive language, which on its own may provide only marginal pipeline value.

Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that section (a)(7) to be rewritten as:

(a) Upratings and Upgradings shall meet the following requirements:

*(7) **Unless approved in writing by the GPSU** the MAOP in the Pipeline(s) undergoing the uprating shall be the highest pressure obtained at the approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s). The approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s) shall be determined by system modeling. For Upgradings, the highest pressure obtained shall be no more than one pound per square inch gauge less than the MAOP.*

N. Sec. 16-280b-B32. Operator Qualification

Proposed Regulation:

(e) Those who inspect others performing Covered Tasks shall be trained and certified for the Covered Tasks they are inspecting.

…

(i) Evaluations.

…

(4) Oral exam and observation during performance on the job or simulation Evaluations shall not exceed one individual being Qualified per Evaluator at a time.

Companies Written Comments:

The Companies understand and agree with the intent of the proposed regulation to best ensure that individuals performing Covered Tasks or inspecting others performing Covered Tasks are highly proficient and provide the structure to evaluate the skill and ability of its workers most appropriately. The Companies recommend modifying the language to provide some flexibility for part (e) while preserving the intent of the regulation. There are some tasks (e.g., welding, NDE, operating specific equipment such as HDD, performing large diameter/high pressure stops) for which it is not practical to maintain ones Operator Qualification, but the individual still maintains the competency necessary to inspect others performing those Covered Tasks.

With respect to evaluations, there are three primary concerns where clarifying language is recommended.

1. There are some tasks where knowledge only is sufficient and performance or simulation is not practical (e.g., Uprating or excavating near a Pipeline where demonstration of knowledge of safe digging practices should suffice to consider one to be competent). The Companies recommend adding language that provides relief while preserving the intent of the regulation.
2. Language should be clear that oral evaluations may be done in conjunction with performance/simulation.
3. Language should be clear that simulation could include pictures on a written exam if that task is a visual inspection task.

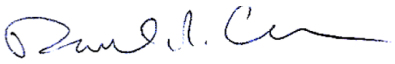
Companies' Recommendation:

The Companies recommend that Sec. 16-280b-B32 be revised as follows:

> (*e) Those who inspect others performing Covered Tasks shall be trained and certified for the Covered Tasks they are inspecting* ***except Operator tasks as identified as exceptions to this requirement in the Operator's OQ Plan.***
>
> *...*
>
> *(i) Evaluations.*
>
> *...*
>
> > *(4) Oral exam and observation during performance on the job or simulation* ***may be accomplished in conjunction with performance evaluations or simulations. Pictures on a written exam may qualify as performance evaluations or simulations if that task is a visual inspection task. Performance*** *evaluations shall not exceed one individual being Qualified per Evaluator at a time.*
> >
> > ***(9) Unless the GPSU approves in writing, Covered Tasks will have written and practical evaluation components.***

The Companies appreciate the opportunity to provide these written comments in response to the Notice and Proposed Regulations and further welcome the opportunity to discuss the Companies' recommended changes, in a collaborative effort with the GPSU to ensure a safe, reliable gas distribution system.

Sincerely,



Daniel R. Canavan
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
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As Agent for Connecticut Natural Gas Corporation and
The Southern Connecticut Gas Company

Norwich Public Utilities

October 20, 2023

Mr. Jeffrey R. Gaudiosi, Esq.
Executive Secretary
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: Comments regarding PURA 23-07-21

Dear Mr. Gaudiosi:

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) respectfully submits the following comments regarding the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (the Authority) proceeding to revise Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 16-11-22, 16-11-31, 16- 11-41, and 16-16-2 and repeal and replace outdated regulations with Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 16-280b-A1 to 16-280b-A76, inclusive, 16-280b-B1 to 16-280b-B32, inclusive, 16-280b-C1 to 16-280b-C10, inclusive. NPU appreciates the opportunity to offer comments to this rulemaking and respectfully requests that the Authority consider the recommended changes NPU has proposed herein.

NPU offers these comments and recommended changes with the absolute intention of meeting the objective of the regulations from a pipeline safety perspective. NPU remains committed to working with the Authority to align Connecticut regulations with state law and federal safety standards, with the goal of enhancing pipeline safety and gas system reliability.

General Comments:

Timeframe and Cost for Implementation and Compliance

The scope of work required to comply with the proposed regulations is significant. The City of Norwich, which NPU serves, is among the most distressed municipalities in Connecticut, as ranked annually by the Connecticut Department of Economic Development. As such, it is very challenging to hire additional staff and/or contractors, as the financial burden of doing so falls on our community ratepayers. NPU is grateful to have recently received a $10 million grant to accelerate the replacement of cast iron gas mains and associated services through the 2021 Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). NPU appreciates the support we received from CT PURA and the GPSU in applying for this grant and the financial relief this

grant provides to our ratepayers. However, the rate of replacement work associated with the grant is considerably greater than NPU's typical annual replacement rate, and there are significant additional administrative requirements associated with complying with federal grant regulations. The resulting impact will be NPU staff taking on more duties and responsibilities. CT PURA 23-07-21 will also result in NPU staff having to take on more duties and responsibilities, when there is only so much capacity to do so.

The design and installation requirements proposed by these regulations will extend the timeframe needed to fully design, install, relocate, or retrofit new and existing facilities. Standards and work procedures will need to be reviewed and modified, and in some instances, new standards and procedures may need to be developed. Furthermore, should global supply chain challenges persist, this will have a continued impact on the ability of Operators to readily procure the needed equipment and materials, particularly for specialty gas equipment. This again increases the timeframe needed for the work required by the proposed regulations.

NPU emphasizes these points to demonstrate the safe and effective execution of a work plan to comply with the proposed regulations requires reasonable implementation timeframes.

Comments on Specific Proposed Regulations:

NPU respectfully submits the following specific comments and recommendations for the following individual proposed regulations.

Sec. 16-280b-A5. Effective dates and applicability

Proposed Regulation:

Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective immediately with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16-280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

NPU Comment(s):

NPU could not possibly implement and/or comply with every proposed regulation except those excluded in Sec. 16-280b-A5 on an "effective immediately" timeline. NPU does not believe it was PURA's intention to make all non-excluded regulations to be effective on the first day following passage of these regulations and recommends an effective date of January 1, 2026, as recommended below.

NPU Recommendation(s):

Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective ~~immediately~~ January 1, 2026 with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16- 280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

16-280b-A20(4). Notifications

Proposed Regulation:

Each Operator shall notify the GPSU as soon as practicable but not later than 1 hour after an Operator can reasonably determine, based on information available to the Operator that any of the following involving an Operator's Pipeline Facilities have occurred:

(4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area due to Gas odor;

NPU Comment(s):

Our Customer Service Representatives and Control Room Operators procedurally recommend evacuation of a building as a precautionary measure whenever customers report an odor of gas. NPU believes the intent of this regulation is to notify GPSU only when the evacuation is issued by responding Operator personnel and/or first responders, such as fire and/or police department personnel.

NPU Recommendation(s):

Each Operator shall notify the GPSU as soon as practicable but not later than 1 hour after an Operator can reasonably determine, based on information available to the Operator that any of the following involving an Operator's Pipeline Facilities have occurred:

(4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area by a qualified individual or entity (e.g., Operator personnel, Fire/Police first responder), due to Gas odor that is confirmed to be natural gas;

Sec. 16-280b-A25 (d) and (e). Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

(d) Service Regulators shall be labeled to reflect the installed interchangeable components, such as orifice size, core size and spring pressure range at the time such Service Regulators or components are changed or replaced.

(e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.

NPU Comment(s):

NPU interprets the language of Sec. 16-280b-A25(d) to apply only to Service Regulators or components that are changed or replaced following the effective date of the regulations. If this is the intent of the regulation, NPU believes potential future conflicting interpretations can be avoided by including Sec. 16-280b-A25(d) in 16-280(b)-A5, so that it is clear A25(d) applies only to Service Regulators or components that are changed and replaced "going forward".

With respect to Sec. 16-280b-A25(e) NPU does not believe the intention of this regulation is to mandate a standalone Service Regulator inspection program so long as other existing Operator activities facilitate periodic inspection of Service Regulators. As such, to avoid potential future conflicting interpretations, NPU recommends clarifying language that specifically allows Service Regulators inspections to occur coincidentally with other Operator activities.

NPU Recommendation(s):

Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective ~~immediately~~ January 1, 2026 with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A25(d), 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16- 280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

(e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. Inspections may be performed as part of existing maintenance activities (e.g., meter exchange, walking surveys, etc.). The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.

Sec. 16-280b-A42(b)(1). Customer Meters and Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

(b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be located outdoors; and

NPU Comment(s):

NPU currently has 4,038 meters, of 10,151 total meters, located inside the property served. For several decades in the 1900's and even into the very early 2000's the natural gas delivered to NPU, and/or processed by NPU, had a higher than optimal moisture content. This high moisture content made outside meters susceptible to freezing in winter months. To mitigate this risk, it was standard practice to locate meters inside customers' homes where the ambient air temperatures are much warmer. The moisture content in natural gas received today is of much higher quality and moisture content has not been a concern for many years. NPU's current practice is to install all new or replaced services such that the meters are all located outdoors.

NPU fully agrees with the safety benefit of locating all customer meters outdoors and is committed to achieving this goal. Where NPU may be somewhat unique compared to other natural gas operators is that of the 4,083 inside in the NPU gas system, 3,819 have outdoor Curb Valves. While relocating inside meters to the outdoors is a high priority in our Distribution Integrity Management Program (DIMP) the replacement of cast iron gas mains is a higher

priority. A large contributing factor why the replacement of cast iron gas mains is a higher priority than the relocation of inside meters to outdoors is the very high percentage (93%) of our inside meters that have an accessible Curb Valve that can be utilized to stop the flow of gas to a property very quickly.

With continued support by the IIJA, NPU anticipates replacement of all cast iron gas mains by the end of 2028. This cast iron replacement project will require significant commitment of the same group of internal employees that would be required to relocate inside meters to outdoors. NPU has only three (3) internal work crews to maintain 156 miles of gas mains, 201 miles of water mains, 1,234 fire hydrants, and 125 miles of wastewater (sewer) mains, therefore undertaking a project to relocate 4,038 inside meters to outdoors in ten (10) years with a net two (2) work crews is untenable.

NPU anticipates applying for additional IIJA funding for the relocation of inside gas meters to the outdoors at the next round of Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), anticipated to be released in 2025. While NPU has been successful in receiving IIJA funds thus far, there are no guarantees that future funding will be approved, therefore, NPU is very concerned about the proposed deadline associated with Sec. 16-280b-A42(b)(1).

NPU recognizes there is language in the proposed regulation offering potential relief from the ten (10) year deadline in the form of written approval by the GPSU, however there is no guarantee that written approval will be granted, nor are there any indications in the proposed regulation of what criteria would be used to assess an Operator's request for an extension.

NPU Recommendation(s):

(b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators that do not have an associated accessible and operable Curb Valve shall be located outdoors; and

(2) the connection between Operator piping and customer piping shall be located at the building wall; and

(c) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 15 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators that have an associated accessible and operable Curb Valve shall be located outdoors.

(Note: All subsequent sections of Sec. 16-280b-A42 are appropriately renumbered/lettered)

Sec. 16-280b-A50(a). Corrosion protective coating

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, coated steel Pipe shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector, if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.

NPU Comment(s):

NPU believes the intent of this regulation is to require significant lengths of coated steel Pipe to be electrically inspected prior to being put into service, not small repair sections. As such, NPU recommends applying this proposed regulation to lengths of main or service Pipe greater than 20 feet in length.

NPU Recommendation(s):

(a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, lengths of coated steel Pipe greater than 20 feet shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector, if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.

Sec. 16-280b-A54(c). Test Points

(c) A Test Point shall be added in any location where Pipe under cathodic protection is exposed to repair a corrosion leak, unless a Test Point currently exists within 500 feet of the leak.

NPU Comment(s):

NPU believes the intent of this regulation is to apply to pipes exposed after the effective date of these regulations, however the proposed language does not specifically state such. NPU recommends clarifying language to mitigate potential future interpretation conflicts.

NPU Recommendation(s):

(c) A Test Point shall be added in any location where Pipe under cathodic protection is exposed, subsequent to the effective date stated in Sec. 16-280b-A5, to repair a corrosion leak, unless a Test Point currently exists within 500 feet of the leak.

Sec. 16-280b-A69 (c) & (e). Abandonment or deactivation of facilities

Proposed Regulation:

(c) Not later than 90 calendar days after only a Curb Valve is closed to terminate service to a customer, the Service Line shall be Abandoned.

(e) Previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.

NPU Comment(s):

(c) In the process of performing annual safety surveys, there are times when customers are non-responsive to multiple NPU requests to access inside meters, and therefore NPU must close the Curb Valve to compel the customer to allow access to the inside meter. If closing the Curb Valve is done in early summer and the customer is a "cooking-only" customer, while rare, there have been occasions where the Curb Valve remained closed for greater than 90 calendar days. NPU believes it prudent to include language that allows exceptions in certain circumstances.

(e) There may be situations where a Pipe has been physically disconnected, either due to the requirements of 16-280b-A69 or for other reasons, where the re-use of the abandoned pipe is both safe and cost effective. An example would be change of property ownership where a customer no longer wishes to use gas, the gas Operator abandons the service, then a new property owner purchases the property shortly thereafter and requests gas service. NPU believes it prudent to include language that allows exceptions in certain circumstances.

NPU Recommendation(s):

(c) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, not later than 90 calendar days after only a Curb Valve is closed to terminate service to a customer, the Service Line shall be Abandoned.

(e) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.

Sec. 16-280b-B18(a). Cover

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with a minimum cover of 30 inches. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

NPU Comment(s):

NPU agrees with the intent of this proposed regulation that installing gas mains at a depth of 30" below grade is a sensible best practice. However, there are times when existing underground utilities prevent an Operator from being able to achieve the full 30 inches of cover. The proposed language does not allow an Operator to employ other best practices for situations where short segments of a gas main may have to be installed with less than 30 inches of cover. An example of best practices that can be employed to protect gas mains installed at depths less than 30 inches include installing Operator approved steel or polyethylene plates above the main to help mitigate against excavation damage.

Recommendation:

(a) Unless approved by GPSU in writing, Belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed either with a minimum cover of 30 inches or with an Operator approved protective device over the main if 30 inches of cover cannot be achieved. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

Sec. 16-280b-B26(a) (2) & (3) Odorization of Gas

Proposed Regulation:

(a) The periodic sampling required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.625(f), as amended from time to time, shall be performed:

(2) at sufficient locations to ensure that all Gas within each Pipeline contains the required odorant concentration:

(3) at location(s) downstream of each odorant introduction point suitable to assess the extremities or if there are multiple introduction points, the Gas flow null point; and

NPU Comment(s):

NPU believes that (a)(3) is unnecessary due to the comprehensive requirement stated in the language of (a)(2). NPU does not oppose further strengthening (a)(2) by making reference to testing odorant levels at system extremities. NPU would advise against specifically calling out Gas flow null points because these points are highly variable, depending on when and which gas customers are added or subtracted from the system as well as highly variable seasonal gas load dynamics.

NPU Recommendation(s):

(a) The periodic sampling required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.625(f), as amended from time to time, shall be performed:

(2) at sufficient locations to ensure that all Gas within each Pipeline contains the required odorant concentration, including system extremities; and

~~(3) at location(s) downstream of each odorant introduction point suitable to assess the extremities or if there are multiple introduction points, the Gas flow null point; and~~

Conclusion

NPU appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Our goal in doing so is to provide practical alternatives for the Authority's consideration, which we believe meet or exceed the intended pipeline safety objectives of these regulations. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher LaRose
General Manager

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October 20, 2023

Jeffrey R. Gaudiosi, Esq.
Executive Secretary
Public Utilities Regulatory Authority
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: Docket No. 23-07-21, Regulations for Gas Pipeline Safety – Written Comments

Dear Mr. Gaudiosi:

The Yankee Gas Services Company d/b/a Eversource Energy submits the attached comments in response to the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority's August 21, 2023 Notice of Public Comment Period in the above-captioned Docket.

Very truly yours,
Eric Eggleston
Eric Eggleston
On Behalf of Yankee Gas Services Company d/b/a
Eversource Energy

cc: Service List

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

REGULATIONS FOR GAS PIPELINE SAFETY	:	**DOCKET NO. 23-07-21**
	:	
	:	**OCTOBER 20, 2023**

COMMENTS OF YANKEE GAS SERVICES COMPANY D/B/A EVERSOURCE ENERGY

I. INTRODUCTION

Yankee Gas Services Company d/b/a Eversource Energy ("Yankee" or "Eversource") submits these written comments in response to the August 21, 2023 Notice of Public Comment Period issued by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (the "Authority" or "PURA") in the captioned Docket, regarding the Authority's plans to revise Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 16-11-22, 16-11-31, 16- 11-41, and 16-16-2 and repeal and replace outdated regulations with Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 16-280b-A1 to 16-280b-A76, inclusive, 16-280b-B1 to 16-280b-B32, inclusive, 16-280b-C1 to 16-280b-C10, inclusive. Yankee appreciates the opportunity to offer these comments regarding this rulemaking and respectfully requests that the Authority and the Gas Pipeline Safety Unit ("GPSU") consider these recommended changes to the proposed regulations.

These comments are organized as follows. This Section I provides the introductory statements to these comments. Section II provides holistic comments on the overall regulations and implementation plan. Section III provides discrete, specific comments on certain proposed regulations of concern to the Company. Section IV then summarizes and concludes the written comments.

II. GENERAL COMMENTS

The scope of work required to meet the desired outcome of the proposed regulations is significant, as will be the management of change processes required by the Operators to ensure resources (both in terms of hiring and training or qualifying), procedure updates, systems updates, and ensuring necessary oversight and quality assurance is in place. These comments highlight implementation timeframes that are of concern and suggest practical alternatives that, for example, incorporate risk-based prioritization schedules such that the highest degree of pipeline safety value is realized as quickly as possible. Timeframes to implement certain aspects of this regulation are very much dependent on a multitude of factors, the most significant of which are explained in detail below.

The availability of qualified personnel, be they field personnel from the represented workforce, contractor personnel who conduct various construction or maintenance activities, or engineering personnel, will have a direct and profound impact on the ability of Operators to execute the work required by the proposed regulations. Expanding the workforce to enable Operators to execute the proposed work activities will take extensive time to recruit, hire, onboard, train, and qualify individuals as required by role. Additionally, the need to review and possibly amend the associated labor union agreements and contractor agreements would add to the time it would take to realize the workforce needed for the proposed regulations.

Secondly, design and installation requirements proposed by regulations will extend the timeframe needed to fully design, install, relocate, or retrofit new and existing facilities. Standards and work procedures will need to be reviewed and modified, and in some instances, new standards and procedures may need to be developed. Furthermore, should global supply chain challenges persist, this will have an impact on the ability of Operators to readily procure the needed equipment

and materials, particularly for specialty gas equipment. This again increases the timeframe needed for the work required by the proposed regulations.

Thirdly, there are limitations that exist for each operator to execute the needed construction work within shortened timeframes due to seasonal constraints that ensure reliable service to customers. To manage their gas distribution system safely and reliably, an Operator needs to properly coordinate any potential supply interruptions and limit these activities to the warmer months of the construction season, typically from April to November each year. The short construction timeframe also impacts the coordination with municipalities in areas such as obtaining permits, potential easements, or traffic control and police details. Extra caution should be taken to ensure that the regulations do not introduce undue additional risks by nature of the short timeframes proposed.

Finally, time will be required for such things as revising Operator Qualification written plans to align with Covered Task requirements; setting up processes and systems for training, documentation of training, and tracking evaluator and trainer requirements; implementing new performance evaluations; setting up program effectiveness plans and systems to track effectiveness metrics; implementing 100% pass requirements for abnormal operating condition (AOC) questions; and setting up and implementing change management plans.

The Company emphasizes these points as the safe and effective execution of a work plan to comply with the proposed regulations requires reasonable implementation timeframes and operational flexibility, as each operator is impacted to varying degrees. Timelines to implement company-specific components will vary depending on the scale of the company and their status relative to the required end state.

The Company also notes that these proposed pipeline safety regulations are only part of the considerable changes within the natural gas industry. At the federal level, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ("PHMSA") is also in the process of promulgating major changes to the federal regulations in 49 CFR 191 and 49 CFR 192, which will impact the operations of the local distribution companies ("LDCs") in Connecticut. Complying with the revised regulations proposed here, as well as at the federal level, will include significant costs to implement in terms of both capital investment and incremental, ongoing operation and maintenance costs. These costs will need to be timely reviewed under PURA's well-established standards to ensure prudent implementation of the changes required by these regulations are fairly recovered from customers.

III. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

The Company provides its written comments on the following proposed regulations in the captioned docket.

1. Section 16-280b-A5. Effective Dates

Proposed Regulation:

> Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective immediately with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16-280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

Discussion:

Yankee supports the intent of the proposed regulation to implement enhancements and comply with the new regulations in as expeditious a manner as practical. However, Yankee is

concerned that if regulations are effective immediately, the Company will not have sufficient time to comply with the requirements. The above General Comments outline the challenges relative to implementation timeframes. Yankee will need at least 18 months to update company policies and procedures and implement the requisite changes including the training of personnel. In addition, Yankee will provide comments on specific regulations later in this document that will suggest portions of proposed regulations be added to the applicability limitation to new pipelines only. Those are included here as recommended language changes.

Recommendation:

> Effective dates and applicability All State Regulations are effective ~~immediately~~ January 1, 2026, with respect to all Pipeline Facilities, unless otherwise noted, except for the following State Regulations which are effective immediately only with respect to installation of new Pipeline Facilities: 16-280b-A25(d), 16-280b-A28, 16- 280b-A30(b), 16-280b-A31, 16-280b-A32, 16-280b-A33, 16-280b-A34, 16-280b-A35, 16- 280b-A37, 16-280b-A38, 16-280b-A39(a), 16-280b-A39(b), 16-280b-A39(c), 16-280bA39(d), 16-280b-A40, 16-280b-A41, 16-280b-A44(a), 16-280b-A45, 16-280b-A46, 16- 280b-A50, 16-280b-B8, 16-280b-B9, 16-280b-B13(b), 16-280b-B16, 16-280b-B17, 16- 280b-B18, 16-280b-B20, 16-280b-C4 and 16-280b-C7(4).

2. Section 16-280b-A20(4). Notifications

Proposed Regulation:

> Each Operator shall notify the GPSU as soon as practicable but not later than 1 hour after an Operator can reasonably determine, based on information available to the Operator that any of the following involving an Operator's Pipeline Facilities have occurred:
>
> (4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area due to Gas odor;

Discussion:

As written, mandatory evacuations may require notification to the GPSU independent of whether the investigation reveals the cause to be natural gas, or the evacuation is called for by a qualified individual or entity. It is standard operating practice for customer service representatives

and control room operators to routinely recommend evacuation as a precautionary measure when customers smell gas. Yankee agrees with the intent of this section to notify GPSU of an evacuation condition deemed hazardous by qualified personnel on scene during a gas leak investigation and suggest modifying the language as outlined in the recommendation below to clarify this intent.

Recommendation:

> Each Operator shall notify the GPSU as soon as practicable but not later than 1 hour after an Operator can reasonably determine, based on information available to the Operator that any of the following involving an Operator's Pipeline Facilities have occurred:
>
> (4) the mandatory evacuation of a building or area by a qualified individual or entity (e.g., Operator, first responder) due to Gas odor that is confirmed to be natural gas;

3. Section 16-280b-A25(d) and (e). Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

> (d) Service Regulators shall be labeled to reflect the installed interchangeable components, such as orifice size, core size and spring pressure range at the time such Service Regulators or components are changed or replaced.
>
> (e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.

Discussion:

Yankee suggests part (d) be included as an exclusion in 16-280(b)-A5 to allow sufficient time to complete an initial inspection cycle and perform the recommended tasks on a going forward basis. This exclusion is added to the recommended changes to 16-280(b)-A5 in Section III.1. of these comments above.

With respect to part (e), "inspected periodically" does not necessarily require a new program but may be done in conjunction with another program, such as the meter exchange. The Company recommends modifying the language to clarify this intent.

Recommendation:

> (e) Service Regulators shall be inspected periodically to ensure they are in working order. Inspections may be performed as part of an existing maintenance program (e.g., meter exchange program). The inspection shall consist of external examination of the regulator, its piping, seal, vent line and operating condition and shall include verifying the lock-up pressure. Any Service Regulator found functioning improperly shall be replaced or repaired immediately.

4. Section 16-280b-A42. Customer Meters and Service Regulators

Proposed Regulation:

> (a) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, where any Service Line is installed, replaced or relocated:
>
> (2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be installed at the building wall.
>
> (b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:
>
> (1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be located outdoors; and
>
> (2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be located at the building wall.

Discussion:

Yankee understands and agrees with the intent of this proposed section that the transition point from jurisdictional piping to customer piping be located adjacent to structure but recommends changes to (a)(2) to clarify this intent. Use of the term "located" rather than "installed" broadens the language and allows for situations where there is an existing connection. The replacement of the words "building wall" with "adjacent to the structure" allows for instances where there may not be a building wall.

For part (b), Yankee recommends a study to help establish reasonable timeframes and risk-based relocation priorities. The results of the study could be incorporated into the Company's

Distribution Integrity Management Program ("DIMP"). While the Company recognizes the benefits of locating meters at the outside wall of the structures they are serving, the proposed regulation will require the relocation and/or replacement of potentially thousands of state-of-the-art plastic and cathodically protected steel services that currently supply these inside meters and regulators.

Further, the resources required to perform these relocations as well as the replacement of non-state-of-the-art services ahead of planned DIMP replacement programs will compete with the resources currently dedicated to other DIMP programs and will be a considerable burden to be borne by ratepayers. As such, Yankee recommends that any program identifying a predetermined and arbitrary timeline to relocate all customer meters and regulators outside be removed from the proposed regulations and addressed within future rate cases so that a formal comprehensive study of the resources required and associated discussion of costs can be thoroughly researched to determine a reasonable gas Operator-specific timeline with supporting rate recovery. To address the issue of replacement programs, an alternative would be to allow more time to move meters outside for services that have an excess flow vale ("EFV") or curb valve installed. These have been installed consistently since federal regulations were revised to require them in 2017, and therefore are most likely on state-of-the-art services that have been installed as new or replaced services since that time.

Finally, if a timeline remains in the regulations, Yankee recommends that the required timelines apply only to residential customer meters and service regulators. Commercial and industrial customers typically have larger service lines supplying them, which in turn results in larger or more complex meter and regulator installations involving more time and labor costs to move from inside to outside. These meters and regulators, if installed inside a building, are

typically installed in accessible areas, protected, and treated like other industrial equipment, in contrast to inside piping and meters in residences which may be inaccessible or subject to damage in other ways, such as having residents' personal belongings stored close to the meters, regulators and piping. There is also less likelihood that the Company will have issues with accessing these commercial and industrial meters for inspections in accordance with the regulations. There is less benefit to moving all commercial and industrial meters from inside to outside, with increased cost.

Recommendation:

(a) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, where any Service Line is installed, replaced or relocated:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be installed ~~located~~ outdoors; and

(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be ~~installed~~ located ~~building wall~~ adjacent to the structure.

~~(b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION]:~~

~~(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators shall be located outdoors; and~~

~~(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be located at the building wall.~~

OR

(b) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, on or before [INSERT DATE 10 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION] for services without an excess flow valve or curb valve, and [INSERT DATE 15 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE OF REGULATION] for services with an excess flow valve or curb valve:

(1) Customer Meters and Service Regulators on residential Service Lines shall be located outdoors; and

(2) the connection between Operator Piping and customer piping shall be located at the building wall.

5. Section 16-280b-A50(a). Corrosion protective coating

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, coated steel Pipe shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector, if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.

Discussion:

Yankee understands and agrees with the intent but recommends modifying the language to provide more specificity and eliminate those inspections that are impractical and do not provide incremental public safety value.

Recommendation:

> (a) Pursuant to 49 CFR 192.461(c), as amended from time to time, coated steel mains of length greater than 20 feet and complete services greater than 1.25 inches in diameter ~~Pipe~~ shall be electrically inspected after or immediately prior to lowering in the trench using a holiday detector, if the type of coating allows for electrical inspection at the time of installation.

7. Section 16-280b-A58. Continuing Surveillance

Proposed Regulation:

> (a) Continuing surveillance required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.613, as amended from time to time, shall include a review of all Pipeline Facilities to ensure compliance with Federal Regulations, State Regulations and Procedures at the following intervals:
>
> (1) at least once each calendar year, but at intervals not exceeding 15 months in Business Districts; and
>
> (2) at least once every 3 calendar years, but at intervals not exceeding 39 months in all other areas.
>
> (b) Any deficiencies found during continuing surveillance shall be remediated prior to the next inspection required by subsection (a) of this section.

Discussion:

The remediation of deficiencies identified during continuous surveillance should be prioritized by the potential impact to the safety or reliability of the distribution system. Operators currently have written programs which address AOCs and other system deficiencies. Timelines to remediate these deficiencies should be specified within these written programs for all identified AOCs or deficiencies. This approach will eliminate potential conflict in remediation timeline requirements between this code section and programmatic requirements.

Recommendation:

(b) Any deficiencies found during continuing surveillance shall be remediated ~~prior to the next inspection required by subsection (a) of this section.~~ in accordance with the Operator's specific written deficiency remediation program.

8. Section 16-280b-A69. Abandonment or Deactivation of Facilities

Proposed Regulation:

(c) Not later than 90 calendar days after only a Curb Valve is closed to terminate service to a Customer, the Service Line shall be abandoned.

(e) Previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.

Discussion:

There may be instances where a pipeline constructed of modern plastic or cathodically protected steel and fully capable of safely transporting natural gas has been abandoned and physically disconnected. In these cases, there would be a cost to install new pipe without any incremental public safety benefit. Yankee recommends modifying the language to allow for these situations while still meeting the intent of the proposed regulation.

Recommendation:

(c) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, not later than 90 calendar days after only a Curb Valve is closed to terminate service to a Customer, the Service Line shall be abandoned.

(e) Unless approved by the GPSU in writing, previously Abandoned pipe shall not be used in the Transportation of Gas.

9. Section 16-280b-A76. Threat Identification

Proposed Regulation:

Not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of an alert, advisory bulletin, recommendation or similar notification from the National Transportation Safety Board, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, trade organizations, GPSU, or similar organizations, each Operator shall take appropriate

action to review its Procedures and Pipeline Facilities to identify if modifications are required and shall report to the GPSU the results of the review including a timeframe for the completion of any modifications required.

Discussion:

Yankee agrees with the intent of this proposed code section that Operators shall promptly review and take action on applicable pipeline safety related notifications. However, the scope of organizations that may issue such notifications is overly broad. For example, there is no definition or limitation provided for terms "trade organization" or "similar organization". As written, the regulation may be misconstrued to require continuous monitoring of a significant number of sources, which typically do not issue such notices, to assure compliance. The language proposed below addresses these concerns.

Recommendation:

Not later than 10 calendar days after receipt of an alert, advisory bulletin, recommendation or similar notification from the National Transportation Safety Board, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, ~~— trade organizations, GPSU, or similar organizations,~~ or other industry authority on natural gas system matters warning of concerns related to the safety or integrity of the gas system, as requested by GPSU, each Operator shall take appropriate action to review its Procedures and Pipeline Facilities to identify if modifications are required and shall report to the GPSU the preliminary results of the review including a timeframe for the completion of any modifications required.

10. Section 16-280b-B11(b). Enclosures

Proposed Regulation:

(b) Equipment located in belowground enclosures shall be designed to continue operating normally if submerged.

Discussion:

There may be "equipment", such as telemetering in enclosures, that is not designed to be submersible but would not impact the safe and reliable transportation of gas should it malfunction. Yankee recommends modifying the language to align with the intent of this proposed regulation.

Recommendation:

> (b) Equipment located in belowground enclosures whose malfunction could directly impact the safe operation and reliability of the gas system shall be designed to continue operating normally if submerged.

11. Section 16-280b-B17(b). Inspections

Proposed Regulation:

> (b) New construction contractors and new crew leaders of existing construction contractors shall be inspected while performing construction related Covered Tasks until clear competency in performing the applicable Covered Tasks has been demonstrated.

Discussion:

Yankee agrees with the requirement to have specific inspections for new construction contractors and new crew leaders to ensure the new contractors and leaders are familiar with the Company's Covered Tasks; in fact, Yankee has required this review within its procedures for several years.[1] While Yankee has no comment on the overall concept of inspecting new crews and new leaders to ensure they understand the covered tasks they will be performing on the Company's system, and also that they understand how to document work in Yankee's system, among other things, Yankee believes subsection (b) should be clarified to determine how "competency" will be demonstrated. GPSU currently reviews LDC procedures when they are revised, as well as during their biennial Operations and Maintenance ("O&M") audits. To avoid

[1] The requirements for inspecting new contractor crews and new crew leaders are contained in Yankee Work Practice WP-AD-001, Auditing & Continuous Improvement Plan.

an overly cumbersome regulation and to allow the individual LDCs to determine "competency" within their own programs, Yankee believes that adding a statement to the proposed regulation to clarify that "competency" will be determined in the context of the operator's procedures makes sense.

Recommendation:

> (b) New construction contractors and new crew leaders of existing construction contractors shall be inspected while performing construction related Covered Tasks until clear competency in performing the applicable Covered Tasks has been demonstrated. The process for determining competency shall be defined in the operator's procedures.

12. Section 16-280b-B18(a). Cover

Proposed Regulation:

> (a) Belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with a minimum cover of 30 inches. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

Discussion:

Yankee understands and agrees with the intent to provide sufficient cover to adequately protect pipeline facilities but recommends modifying the language to allow for situations where 30 inches of cover may not be possible or feasible.

Recommendation:

> (a) Unless approved in writing by the GPSU, belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with either a minimum cover of 30 inches or with approved protection if 30 inches cannot be achieved. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

OR

> (a) Unless approved in writing by the GPSU**,** belowground Mains, except at transitions to aboveground Mains, shall be installed with a minimum cover of 30 inches. Operators will identify protective methods to be taken to ensure the future integrity of the pipeline in their request to the GPSU for approval of Mains to be installed at a cover less than 30 inches. Appurtenances installed on Mains do not need to comply with this requirement.

13. Section 16-280b-B21(a)(7). Upratings and Upgradings

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Upratings and Upgradings shall meet the following requirements:

(7) The MAOP in the Pipeline(s) undergoing the uprating shall be the highest pressure obtained at the approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s). The approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s) shall be determined by system modeling. For Upgradings, the highest pressure obtained shall be no more than one pound per square inch gauge less than the MAOP.

Discussion:

Yankee understands the intent of the proposed regulation but recommends language that allows for flexibility with respect to the "one psig less than MAOP" requirement. In certain situations, this proposed requirement may not be practical to achieve and alternatives, such as introducing natural gas via compressed natural gas ("CNG") trailer(s), offer limited incremental pipeline safety value. In addition, while the intent is understood, the language is confusing. Yankee suggests that Upgrading procedures be approved by GPSU prior to implementation to allow GPSU and the LDCs to ensure the intent of the proposed regulation is consistently implemented. The language proposed below provides flexibility to address these situations while providing the GPSU decision making authority.

Recommendation:

(a) Upratings and Upgradings shall meet the following requirements:

(7) The MAOP in the Pipeline(s) undergoing the uprating shall be the highest pressure obtained at the approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s). The approximate system endpoint(s) or Gas flow null point(s) shall be determined by system modeling. ~~For~~ Upgrading Procedures shall be ~~, the highest pressure obtained shall be no more than one pound per square inch gauge less than the MAOP~~ approved in writing by the GPSU prior to implementation.

14. Section 16-280b-B26(a)(3). Odorization of Gas

Proposed Regulation:

(a) The periodic sampling required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.625(f), as amended from time to time, shall be performed:

(2) at sufficient locations to ensure that all Gas within each Pipeline contains the required odorant concentration;
(3) at location(s) downstream of each odorant introduction point suitable to assess the extremities or if there are multiple introduction points, the Gas flow null point; and

Discussion:

Yankee understands and agrees with the intent of this proposed regulation. Yankee suggests removing part (3), as the intent to ensure required odorant concentrations in all parts of the Gas system is covered under part (2). Furthermore, Gas flow null points are dynamic in nature, shifting significantly based on source of supply, system pressures, system loads, temperature and other variables. The intent of the regulation can be addressed by requiring part (2) to address the odorant concentration at the system extremities.

Recommendation:

(a) The periodic sampling required pursuant to 49 CFR 192.625(f), as amended from time to time, shall be performed:

(2) at sufficient locations to ensure that all Gas within each Pipeline contains the required odorant concentration throughout the system, including system extremities.
~~(3) at location(s) downstream of each odorant introduction point suitable to assess the extremities or if there are multiple introduction points, the Gas flow null point; and~~

15. Section 16-280b-B32. Operator Qualification

Proposed Regulation:

(a) Definitions:
(2) "Evaluation" means a process, established and documented by the Operator, to determine an individual's ability to correctly perform a Covered Task by the following:
(A) written or oral examination; and
(B) observation during performance on the job or simulations.

(e) Those who inspect others performing Covered Tasks shall be trained and certified for the Covered Tasks they are inspecting.

Discussion:

With respect to the definition of Evaluation in section (a), in many cases, the requisite knowledge, skill, and ability to perform a task can be combined into one evaluation process. This evaluation is a combination of an oral examination and observation during performance on the job or during a simulation. Language in the regulation should be clear that this combined evaluation process is permissible.

In addition, there are a limited number of covered tasks where the task is a visual inspection of a pipe, right-of-way, etc. (e.g., Patrolling and Inspecting Pipelines, Inspecting Third Party Excavations for Damage Prevention). In these cases, demonstration of competency can be effectively accomplished through review of pictures on a written examination. Language in the regulation should be clear that simulation could include pictures on a written exam if that task is a visual inspection task.

There are a very limited number of covered tasks where the task itself is fundamentally knowledge based (e.g., Uprating or Excavating near a Pipeline where demonstration of knowledge of the uprate process or safe digging practices is the essence of the task). In these limited situations, a written or oral evaluation alone would suffice to demonstrate competency). Yankee recommends

adding language that provides relief for these types of covered tasks while meeting the intent of the regulation.

With respect to inspectors covered by section (e) of the regulations, the Company understands and agrees with the intent of the proposed regulation to ensure that individuals inspecting others performing Covered Tasks have the competency to ensure the task is being performed safely, correctly, and in accordance with company procedures. The proposed regulation, however, is overly broad and would apply to certain tasks in which inspectors do not need to be Operator Qualified because there are other resources employed to assess adherence to quality expectations. For example, Certified Welding Inspectors are qualified to inspect welding work but are not qualified to perform the welding itself. Likewise, pipeline inspectors need not be Operator Qualified to install all coating systems, but they need to understand the proper installation process and be competent to inspect the finished product. To further this point, Operators occasionally utilize specialty contractors to perform specialty services that are not typically performed in-house such as large diameter hot taps, directional drilling, and installation of composite repair systems. Additionally, an operator may be evaluating or piloting a new technology (e.g., leak survey equipment, tapping tool). In these cases, the inspector needs to understand the process and be competent to inspect the finished product but does not need to be able to operate the equipment or perform the task as is required with the Operator Qualification process.

The proposed regulation may also have unintended consequences. For example, an inspector may have decades of hands-on experience and capable of passing a written or oral exam to demonstrate subject matter expertise but may not be able to complete the physical examination process (skill and ability) due to physical limitations. This inspector is no less competent to inspect others because he or she is unable to complete the physical requirement for qualification. To

become Operator Qualified, an individual must possess the requisite knowledge, *skill, and ability* (emphasis added) to perform the covered task. Contrarily, in order to be an effective inspector, *knowledge* of the task being overseen is the essential competency to ensure the task is being performed safely and in accordance with company requirements, rather than the skill and ability to perform the task itself.

Recommendation:

(a) Definitions:
(2) "Evaluation" means a process, established and documented by the Operator, to determine an individual's ability to correctly perform a Covered Task by the following:
(A) written or oral examination; and
(B) observation during performance on the job or simulations, except visual inspection Covered Tasks, where the use of pictures within a written evaluation will constitute a simulation. Oral examinations may be combined with observations during performance on the job or simulations into one combined Evaluation.

(e) Those who inspect others performing Covered Tasks shall be trained and certified for the Covered Tasks they are inspecting except Covered Tasks as identified as exceptions to this requirement in the operator's written Operator Qualification Plan.

(i) Evaluations; add the following section:
(9) Unless the GPSU approves in writing, Covered Tasks will have written and practical evaluation components.

IV. CONCLUSION

Yankee fully supports the Authority's efforts to further reinforce safety through the proposed regulations, clarify and update the gas pipeline safety standards to reflect current practices, and repeal and replace outdated requirements. Yankee appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. The Company's goal in offering these comments is to provide practical alternatives for the Authority's consideration, which meet or exceed the intended pipeline safety objectives of the regulations.

Respectfully submitted,

YANKEE GAS SERVICES COMPANY
D/B/A EVERSOURCE ENERGY

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon each person designated on the official service list in this proceeding.

Dated at Berlin, Connecticut this 20th day of October 2023.

Eric Eggleston
Eric Eggleston