

to the docket number and be submitted to: U.S. Department of Transportation Docket Management, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. It is requested, but not required, that two copies be submitted.

All comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated below will be considered. The application and supporting materials, and all comments received after the closing date, will also be filed and will be considered to the extent possible. When the application is granted or denied, notice will be published in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the authority indicated below.

Comment closing date: September 7, 1999.
(49 U.S.C. 30118 and 30120; delegations of authority at 49 CFR 1.50 and 501.8)

Issued on: August 2, 1999.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[FR Doc. 99-20350 Filed 8-5-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-99-6045]

Pipeline Safety: Report of the Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework Working Group

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a one day public meeting to be conducted by RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety to review the final report of the Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework Working Group. This informal working group, consisting of representatives of the gas and hazardous liquid pipeline industry, the Federal government, and academics, developed a framework for use by RSPA to identify and compare the economic costs and benefits of alternative safety actions that could affect the regulated pipeline industry. RSPA invites representatives of the pipeline industry, state and local government, and the public to attend this meeting, make presentations, ask questions, and submit comments to the docket.

DATES: The public meeting will begin at 9:00 am on September 29, 1999, and end no later than 5:00 pm. Persons wishing to make a short presentation may pre-register by contacting Marvin Fell at

(202) 366-6205 to be placed on the speakers list. Persons not pre-registered will be allowed to make comments after the registered speakers have completed their presentations.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Room 8236-40, Washington, DC. Non-federal employee visitors are admitted into the DOT headquarters building through the southwest entrance at Seventh and E Streets, SW.

Information on Services for Individuals With Disabilities

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meeting contact Marvin Fell at (202) 366-6205.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marvin Fell, (202) 366-6205, or by e-mail (marvin.fell@rspa.dot.gov), regarding this notice. The report, A Collaborative Framework for Office of Pipeline Safety Cost-Benefit Analyses (Framework), will be available after August 11, 1999, for inspection and copying in the DOT Dockets Unit, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC, between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm each business day. A copy of the Framework is also available over the Internet at the Office of Pipeline Safety's website, ops.dot.gov. A transcript of the public meeting will be available from the Dockets Unit approximately three weeks after the meeting.

Written comments may be mailed or hand-delivered to the DOT Dockets Unit, Plaza 401, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Comments may also be sent by e-mail to dms.dot.gov. Please refer to the docket number in your submission. Comments must be submitted by November 1, 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Accountable Pipeline Safety and Partnership Act of 1996 requires RSPA to identify the costs and benefits associated with proposed gas and hazardous liquid pipeline regulations. Under the Act, the Secretary of Transportation must propose or issue a regulation only after making a reasoned determination that the benefits of the regulation justify its costs. OPS believes that a collaborative process is the optimal approach for meeting the statutory requirements for cost-benefit analysis and for improving the quality of information used in regulatory policy decisions.

In the spring of 1997, RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety formed the Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework Working Group (Working Group) to collaboratively develop guidelines for performing cost-benefit analyses. Members in this working group included representatives of RSPA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of the Interior (DOI), the American Petroleum Institute (API), the Gas Research Institute (GRI), the American Gas Association (AGA), the Interstate Natural Gas Association (INGAA), the American Public Gas Association (APGA), and the Carnegie-Mellon Research Institute. A number of hazardous liquid, natural gas distribution, and natural gas transmission companies.

Members of the Working Group will discuss the cost-benefit framework report prepared by the Working Group at this public meeting. Members of the Working Group will also present a case study employing the cost-benefit framework to illustrate the application of the framework's process and guidance.

1. Potential Benefits for All Stakeholders

Initial objectives for the Working Group were to explore members' perspectives and experiences with government cost-benefit analyses and to provide members with enough background and knowledge to enable effective participation. In meeting these objectives, the Working Group concluded that RSPA needed a documented framework with which to carry out pipeline safety cost-benefit analyses. Such a framework, its process and guidance, the Working Group believed, is necessary to enable all stakeholders to participate effectively in future pipeline safety initiatives. The Working Group anticipates that the framework will produce the following results:

- More informed decision making in public policy transactions.
- Clearer regulatory priorities and transparent tradeoffs between alternative outcomes.
- Identification of important factors besides economic efficiency for decision makers to consider, such as distributional equity or the potential for irreversible or unintended consequences.
- More efficient regulations that solve actual problems.
- More informed stakeholders, more efficient and effective interactions among stakeholders, and decreased

potential for prolonged conflicts and litigations.

- Promotion of mutual understanding and interests.

2. Guiding Principles

In the early stages of their effort, the Working Group crafted a set of guiding principles for pipeline cost-benefit analyses. The Working Group agreed on fourteen principles that should guide the evaluation of pipeline safety cost-benefit analyses. RSPA intends to refine or modify these guiding principles whenever needed to be consistent with changes in economic theory and methods. Throughout the effort, the Working Group exercised care to ensure that the guiding principles and the cost-benefit framework reflect and are consistent with standard accepted economic concepts and practices. One major reference for the Working Group in developing the guiding principles and framework is the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) guidance for economic analyses.

3. Framework

As envisioned by the Working Group, the framework consists of a process for interaction among stakeholders representing the government, industry, environmental, and safety constituencies, and the public. The Working Group's report, A Collaborative Framework for Office of Pipeline Safety Cost-Benefit Analyses, describes each of the major process components of the framework and gives detailed guidance to carry out each process component. The major process components in the framework are:

- Identifying and defining the target problem.
- Identifying all available alternatives for addressing the target problem.
- Defining the analytical baseline.
- Defining the scope of the analysis.
- Analyzing costs.
- Analyzing benefits.
- Interpreting and using cost-benefit results.
- Evaluating the value and effectiveness of the cost-benefit process.

4. Illustrative Case Study—Pipeline Mapping

Since extensive cost data are available for RSPA's voluntary pipeline mapping initiative, the Working Group elected to do a cost-benefit analysis of this initiative. This case study provided the Working Group a way to illustrate, test, and refine the framework. The Working Group report presents the analytical

results of this case study, reviews the challenges inherent to the application of the framework to analyze the costs and benefits of the initiative, and describes the "lessons learned."

RSPA invites discussions and comments on the Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework Working Group's final report, A Collaborative Framework for Office of Pipeline Safety Cost-Benefit Analyses.

Issued in Washington, DC on August 2, 1999.

Richard B. Felder,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 99-20295 Filed 8-5-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 7)]

Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multilevel Cars

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of filing of application.

SUMMARY: Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM) has filed an application seeking approval for its participation in an existing railroad agreement for the pooling of services related to multilevel cars used to transport motor vehicles and boxcars used to transport automobile parts. TFM is a common carrier engaged in the transportation of property by railroad in Mexico. Its participation in the pooling agreement will be limited to international traffic moving between points in Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

DATES: Any comments on the application must be filed by September 7, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send an original plus 10 copies of any comments, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 7), to the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, send one copy of any comments to: (1) The U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division, 10th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530; and (2) Jamie J. Rainey, 100 West Big Beaver, Suite 200, Troy, MI 48084.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beryl Gordon, (202) 565-1600. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under 49 U.S.C. 11322, the Board may approve pooling agreements that are voluntarily entered into by carriers, provided that the pooling or division of traffic, services, or earnings will be in the interest of better service to the public or of economy of operation and will not unreasonably restrain competition. The pooling agreement that TFM seeks to join was originally approved by the Board's predecessor, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), in *The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, et al.—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multi-Level Cars*, Finance Docket No. 29653 (ICC served Aug. 29, 1981). That agreement applied only to multilevel cars. Subsequently, the ICC approved amendments to the agreement authorizing the pooling of railroad services in auto-parts boxcars in *The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, et al.—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multi-Level Cars*, Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 3) (ICC served Apr. 18, 1986). Other modifications included adding additional carriers to the pool, such as Canadian Pacific Limited in *The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, et al.—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multi-Level Cars*, Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 1) (ICC served Apr. 12, 1983), and Canadian National Railway Company in *The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, et al.—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multi-Level Cars*, Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 2) (ICC served May 12, 1983). The agreement was last amended in *The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, et al.—Pooling of Car Service Regarding Multilevel Cars*, Finance Docket No. 29653 (Sub-No. 6) (ICC served June 30, 1995). It was revised to enable railroads and shippers to obtain and use information that they otherwise would not have, thereby allowing pool members to increase the efficiency of distribution of the multilevel car fleet and minimize unnecessary investment.¹

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

Decided: July 29, 1999.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-20053 Filed 8-5-99; 8:45 am]

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¹ The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initially objected to the amendment as it was originally proposed, but withdrew its objection after the railroads revised the amendment to meet DOJ's concerns.