

Agenda Date: July 29, 2005
Item Number: C2

Docket: PG-050933

Subject: Rulemaking to Consider Possible Corrections and Changes to Selected Rules in Chapter 480-93 WAC Relating to Gas Companies - Safety

Staff: Sondra Walsh, Senior Policy Strategist
Alan Rathbun, Director Pipeline Safety
Don Trotter, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Ann Rendahl, Administrative Law Judge

Recommendation:

Direct the Secretary to file a Preproposal Statement of Inquiry (CR-101) in Docket No. PG-050933 to consider possible corrections and changes to selected rules in Chapter 480-93 WAC, relating to Gas Companies – Safety.

Background:

On May 5, 2005, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission completed a comprehensive review of its safety rules relating to natural gas pipeline operations. The safety rules in Chapter 480-93 WAC took effect on June 2, 2005. In the process of implementing these rules, stakeholders and agency staff have identified several concerns with the following rules: WAC 480-93-005(18), WAC 480-93-017, WAC 480-93-178, WAC 480-93-200(1)(e), and WAC 480-93-200(6)(c).

While these provisions seemed clear at the time they were drafted, they do not appear so clear now. For example, one of the definitions in WAC 480-93-005 should be clarified by omitting language, WAC 480-93-178 should be modified to insert language that was omitted, WAC 480-93-200 should be modified to correct an error in the number of customers identified, and clarify the level of detail needed in an annual report.

Staff recommends that the Commission conduct a limited “tune-up” of the Gas Companies – Safety rules. The rulemaking would consider the specific rules identified, as well as any changes that stakeholders may request. The rulemaking would not include any major policy changes. Staff recommends that any major policy changes be considered in a separate rulemaking proceeding.

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Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the Commission direct the Secretary to file a Preproposal Statement of Inquiry (CR-101) in Docket PG-050933.