

Health & Safety Commission

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Substances

From the Chair
NICK STARLING

Phil Brown
Chairman
UKOPA
Pipeline Maintenance Centre
Ripley Road
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Derbyshire
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24th November 2004

Dear Mr Brown,

ACDS MHSC Working Group on Pipelines – Technical Work Programme

Thank you for your letter of 3rd November about pipeline operators' support for a paper for the Major Hazards Sub-Committee and the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Substances by the Working Group on Pipelines.

HSE welcomes industry interest in improving health and safety and also welcomes interest in the development of technical measures, including models, to improve the basis upon which we all do our work. At the same time, as a regulator HSE sets the policy and ultimately determines the criteria and standards used in providing our advice on land use planning. As the regulator HSE is and must be seen to be independent. Hence, while HSE would always look to improve what it does, it has to ensure that any potential developments adopted are appropriate and better "fit for purpose" than the criteria, standards and model systems that we currently use.

This was the focus of the work involved in product P5 of Implementation of the Fundamental Review on Land Use Planning which is, I understand, complete. Models for use in assessing risks around pipelines were considered and some aspects of pipeline risk assessment methodology feature on the list of risk assessment tools identified for improvement/development. These improvements will be pursued when P6 (the implementation of the findings from P5) is initiated. However, we do not anticipate any further work on P5.

This issue was discussed at the most recent ACDS meeting. Members expressed disappointment that this project had been stopped, citing the amount of work done by stakeholders on the Pipelines WG testing emergency plans, and in establishing a clear duty holder structure. They thought it was vital to agree a secure, clear method of recording the work undertaken by the Pipeline Working Group, to ensure that it was not lost/ forgotten. However, the

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committee acknowledged that HSE was in a difficult position, with limited resources, and a large legislative programme. HSC/HSE had therefore had to take hard decisions, based on the resources available.

We appreciate the effort from and the valuable contribution made by UKOF in this area and can understand your concerns. We look forward to a continuing working relationship.

Your sincerely

Nick Starling
Chairman, ACDS

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