

Contact: Judy Palnau (517) 241-3323

MPSC Directs Staff to Investigate DCP Midstream, LP Natural Gas Pipeline Incidents

September 13, 2011

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) today directed the MPSC staff to conduct an investigation into a series of incidents where pressure in a 20-inch pipeline operated by DCP Midstream, LP, (DCP) exceeded the maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) and to file a report.

On Aug. 3, the company's Bay Area pipeline experienced a pressure increase to 630 pounds per square inch (psi), exceeding the MAOP of 595 psi. Pressure also exceeded the MAOP by greater than 10 percent on July 30. Further investigation showed that although the excess pressure was detected, there was no visual or audible signal alerting the operator of the pipeline condition, as required by the federal and state gas safety standards

The company on Aug. 4, sent a safety related condition report to the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), as required by the federal and state gas safety standards. The MPSC was also notified.

Today's order directs the MPSC staff to conduct an investigation into the incidents and DCP's response activities. To facilitate prompt resolution, the MPSC directed DCP to file an initial report regarding these incidents by 5 p.m. on Sept. 30. At the conclusion of its investigation, the MPSC will file a report in this docket. At the conclusion of the process, the Commission may direct remedial action to be undertaken by DCP.

The MPSC also directed DCP to:

- provide gas to Consumers Energy Company's Karn-Weadock power plant on a limited basis only, with operating personnel on-site at the Kawkawlin station to monitor the pressure, effective immediately, until further order of the MPSC; and
- reduce the pressure in the upstream pipeline that feeds the Bay Area pipeline, effective immediately, until further order of the MPSC.

The MPSC is an agency within the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

Case No. U-16866

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