Significant New Safety Requirements Proposed for Natural Gas Pipelines

On March 17, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued a major proposal to revise the safety standards for onshore natural gas pipelines, reports **Kevin A. Ewing** of **Bracewell LLP**.

"The proposed rule follows years of study as well as specific direction from Congress requiring new pipeline safety initiatives. The proposal spans over 500 pages and contains numerous major and minor revisions and agency statements that together demonstrate PHMSA's intention to assert substantially more control over the design, operation and maintenance of pipelines to prevent incidents," he writes.

More pipelines would be subject to Integrity Management requirements if the rule is approved, he explains. "It would also expand the definition of regulated gathering lines, accelerate pipeline repairs, and set a higher bar for data gathering and analysis of risk, among other changes. The proposed rule does not address underground gas storage, valves and leak detection, or quality management systems."

Read the article.