



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Research and  
Special Programs  
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

AUG 19 1997

Mr. Barry M. Sweedler  
Director, Office of Safety Recommendations  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20594-2000

Dear Mr. Sweedler:

This letter responds to your request on the status of National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendation H-95-37, during a meeting on June 24 with the Federal Highway Administration, the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) and your staff.

A feasibility study conducted by Pressures Sciences, Incorporated, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania began on July 15, 1996, on means to enhance protection for MC-331 cargo tanks in frontal collisions. This project was initiated by the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety and is consistent with recommendation H-95-37. Methods of improving crash worthiness of front heads on MC-331 cargo tanks have been suggested and appropriate standards for design and construction will be identified.

Report Number 96041-005 titled "Study of Enhanced Protection for MC 331 Cargo Tanks in Frontal Collisions," was delivered to RSPA on July 2, 1997. Enclosed is a copy for your information. The study found that head shields and head shields backed by energy absorbing materials offer the greatest impact performance and cost effectiveness potential. A further study including a parametric analysis of head shield and energy absorbing materials is planned for Fiscal Year 1998.

RSPA will continue its efforts to address the methods of improving crash worthiness of the MC-331 front heads and will keep the Board informed.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Roberts  
Associate Administrator for  
Hazardous Materials Safety

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