



By  
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Guest Columnist

## Speak Out Against the New Security Rules

**O**n April 9, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published its new chemical plant security rule. This rule, if left unaltered, has the potential to hit the pocketbooks of this industry hard.

Every facility that stores more than 7500 pounds, or 1785 gallons of propane, is affected by this rule. That certainly includes every single bulk plant, all 11,000 of them. But by the National Propane Gas Association's (NPGA) estimation, DHS's extremely low threshold means tens of thousands of customer facilities would also be affected.

Does the hospital in your area have two 1000-gal. tanks providing heating fuel? Does the small manufacturer across town have 3000 gallons on site, powering its machinery? Is the grain elevator serviced by you storing fuel in four

500-gal. tanks manifolded together? Do the farms in your county use more than 1785 gallons of propane a month, and do they store it onsite? When you refuel the local campground or trailer park, are you putting more than 1785 gallons of propane into a tank or series of tanks?

Each one of these customer facilities will have to register online with DHS and go through a "Top Screen" analysis to find out if they are "high risk" under these new regulations. DHS estimates that the Top Screen process will cost up to \$3500 per facility.

But what happens if the customers are unwilling or unable to expend these resources? They will probably contact you to do it for them as the price of keeping them as a customer.

We have faced this situation before, when we were forced to deal with a similar regulatory burden under EPA's Risk Management Program. NPGA was successful then in defeating the government's proposal, but times have changed and our national environment today is dictated in the wake of 9/11 by increased security demands. Once again we are calling on you to help us make the case with DHS. We are also calling on you to contact your customers so that they, too, can weigh in with their concerns.

It is not too late to change this regulation. Our industry's top priority is to change how the initial "Top Screen" process is handled. DHS's 7500-lb threshold for propane is very low and will force tens of thousands of retail fa-

cilities and customer sites to go through the process. It is critical that we show DHS just how many facilities will be covered at this level.

I have asked all NPGA members to send a letter to DHS explaining how this regulation will affect their own companies. I have also asked NPGA members to notify their customers to send a similar letter to the department, illustrating to DHS just how many Americans will be affected by this bureaucratic overreach.

It is my wish that all NPGA members will take the time to review the information sent to association members in the April issues of NPGA Reports. And, of course, anyone can go online to [www.npga.org](http://www.npga.org) to use our Correspondence Menu to help draft their own letter to DHS. Every letter written and submitted by industry members and their customers will demonstrate that DHS's estimate of affected facilities is wildly mistaken.

You may also want to come to Washington this June 11-13 and tell your Congressional representatives during Propane Days about how this regulation will affect you. Every voice from outside Washington will make a difference in this grass-roots campaign— make sure one of them is yours.

Thanks again for your help with this critical industry initiative.

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*Rick Roldan is president and CEO of the National Propane Gas Association.*