

## Standard Paragraph

E. Any person desiring to be heard or to protest said filing should file a motion to intervene or protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 825 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and 18 CFR 385.214). All such motions or protests should be filed on or before the comment date. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Any person wishing to become a party must file a motion to intervene. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

Lois D. Cashell,  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 95-27198 Filed 11-1-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

## [Docket No. CP94-161-003]

**Avoca Natural Gas Storage; Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Avoca Gas Storage Field Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues, and Notice of Field Visit**

October 27, 1995.

On October 11, 1995, Avoca Natural Gas Storage (Avoca) filed a request with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) to modify its certificated facilities in Steuben County, New York. The FERC staff will prepare a supplemental environmental assessment (EA) on Avoca's proposed modifications, and will consider all relevant comments received in response to this notice.<sup>1</sup> This supplemental EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary and whether to approve the proposed project modifications.

**Summary of Proposed Project Modifications**

Avoca proposes to make the following modifications to the Avoca Gas Storage Field Project:

- Modify the planned fresh water supply to include a direct intake from the Cohocton River of up to 3 million

gallons per day between June 1 and October 31.

- Replace the five certificated natural gas-fired compressor engines with electric motors.

- Construct six gas storage caverns instead of five. Total certificated gas storage volume would remain the same.

- Install a triple header interconnecting pipe rather than the single header currently authorized.

The location of the facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup>

**Additional Background Information and Environmental Overview**

*Freshwater Supply Alternative*—Avoca proposes to modify its freshwater supply source to include a direct surface water intake from the Cohocton River as an alternative to groundwater withdrawals between June and October. Surface water withdrawals would cease when discharge at the stream gage, to be installed at the State Route 415 bridge in the town of Avoca, drops to 14 cubic feet per second (cfs). Avoca argues that a direct river withdrawal is environmentally desirable because it would provide additional protection to fish habitat.

Avoca is currently authorized to withdraw up to 3 million gallons per day of groundwater from wells located on the Slayton farm, about 1 mile north-northeast of the gas storage area. In accordance with the FERC certificate, all withdrawals from these wells must cease when the Cohocton River discharge drops to 18.65 cfs, as recorded at the Avoca gage. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) imposed higher thresholds for phased reductions of groundwater withdrawal.

Direct withdrawal from the Cohocton River requires construction of an intake structure in the river and approximately 1,800 feet of additional water pipeline.

The NYDEC has already approved the direct river withdrawal concept and a 14 cfs threshold for ceasing surface water withdrawals, but has not yet approved the design of the intake structure or a protocol identifying when and how withdrawals would be made and monitored. The SRBC will not consider the matter before its November 15, 1995 meeting. Avoca states that the intake qualifies for Nationwide Permit authorization from the U.S. Army Corps

of Engineers (COE); although that still must be verified through a formal request for determination to be submitted to the COE by Avoca.

*Compressor Modifications*—Avoca is currently authorized to construct a 25,000-horsepower (hp) compressor station to facilitate natural gas injections into the storage caverns. The station was to consist of five 5,000-hp natural gas-fired gas compressor engines. Avoca now proposes to use electric motors to drive the compressor units. Avoca states that the switch to electric motors would eliminate 180 tons per year of criteria pollutant air emissions that would occur using natural gas-fired engines. The electric transmission line to the site is the same as previously proposed.

*Six Cavern Layout*—Construction of the five certificated storage caverns was to be phased-in over 3 years: 2 caverns in 1997, 2 caverns in 1998, and 1 cavern in 1999. Each cavern would have a storage capacity of one billion cubic feet (Bcf).

Avoca states that to meet its storage service obligations, the cavern construction phasing must be altered. It now proposes to construct six smaller caverns rather than the authorized five. The total storage volume would not exceed the authorized 5 Bcf. A 6-cavern arrangement would require 12 storage wells instead of 10. The associated structures, two additional 2,500 square foot (ft<sup>2</sup>) well pads, two additional mud pits, about 2,000 feet of additional pipeline, and a new 1,000 foot access road, would be constructed. The new cavern wells would be located about 1,200 feet northeast of cavern well No. 10.

*Triple Header Interconnection*—Avoca proposes to modify the design of the gas metering and receipt station to allow for the potential interconnection with two additional gas pipelines in addition to the authorized interconnection with Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (Tennessee). The new design would consist of three separate metering skids; one for each of the interconnecting pipelines. All three metering skids would be located on the site originally designated for the Tennessee metering station. However, the footprint of the new interconnection would be 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> larger than originally designed. Avoca argues that installing the three interconnections at the same time would reduce potential environmental impact associated with redistributing the same area in the future.

*Directional Drilling*—On August 11, 1995, the Director of the FERC's Office of Pipeline Regulation authorized Avoca to drill an experimental directional well from a location near its brine disposal

<sup>1</sup> On August 5, 1994, the FERC issued the "Avoca Gas Storage Field Project EA" for public comment. On September 20, 1994, the FERC issued an Order approving the project in Docket No. CP94-161-000.

<sup>2</sup> The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the Federal Register. Copies are available from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

well (BDW-1, or Mitchell 1). The intent was to determine if the six authorized brine disposal wells could be constructed using directional drilling technology from a single location near the gas storage area. Drilling continues as of this date. If successful, directional drilling would substantially reduce the environmental impact of the project by eliminating the need to drill six brine disposal wells at the previously approved locations and approximately 5 miles of brine pipeline. The Director of OPR must still give his final approval for constructing directionally drilled brine disposal wells.

#### The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, or as in this case, an amendment to an existing certificate. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping". The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the supplemental EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the supplemental EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The supplemental EA will discuss only those impacts associated with the proposed modifications to the project, and how these impacts differ from those associated with the currently authorized project.

At this time it appears that the most substantive environmental issue is the protection of the Cohocton River fishery resource. Specific issues we will address include:

- Whether the direct surface water withdrawal would be environmentally less disruptive than groundwater use;
- reduced air and noise emissions from conversion to electric motor-driven compressors; and
- other changes and impacts due to construction of:
  - > 1,800 feet of additional pipeline and a river intake structure;
  - > 6 caverns instead of 5 caverns; and
  - > a larger (tripleheader) meter station.

We will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project modifications, and make

recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the supplemental EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the supplemental EA may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the supplemental EA is published. We will consider all comments on the supplemental EA before we recommend that the Commission approve or not approve the project modifications.

#### Site Visit

The FERC staff will conduct a site visit on November 8, 1995, to inspect the locations of the newly proposed facilities. Anyone who desires to accompany the FERC staff on this site visit is welcome to participate. Any interested parties must provide their own transportation. Call Lonnie Lister, Project Manager, at (202) 208-2191 for details on when and where to meet.

#### Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please follow the instructions below to ensure that your comments are received and properly recorded:

- Address your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426;
- Reference Docket No. CP94-161-003;
- Send a copy of your letter to: Mr. Lonnie Lister, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 825 North Capitol St., N.E., Room 7312, Washington, D.C. 20426; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before November 27, 1995.

If you wish to receive a copy of the supplemental EA, you should request one from Mr. Lister at the above address.

#### Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to

become an official party to the proceeding or become an "intervenor". Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide copies of its filings to all other parties. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214). You do not need intervenor status to have your scoping comments considered.

Additional information about the proposed project is available from Mr. Lonnie Lister, EA Project Manager, at (202) 208-2191.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 95-27175 Filed 11-1-95; 8:45 am]

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#### [Docket No. CP95-119-003, et al.]

#### Steuban Gas Storage Company, et al.; Natural Gas Certificate Filings

October 26, 1995.

Take notice that the following filings have been made with the Commission:

##### 1. Steuben Gas Storage Company

[Docket No. CP95-119-003]

Take notice that, on October 24, 1995, in compliance with the Commission's July 28, 1995, Preliminary Determination issued in Docket Nos. CP95-119-000 and CP95-119-001, Steuben Gas Storage Company (Steuben), 500 Renaissance Center, Detroit, Michigan 48243, filed a revised pro forma tariff for the Thomas Corners Storage Field and its responses to questions posed by the Commission in its Preliminary Determination order.

*Comment date:* November 2, 1995, in accordance with the first paragraph of Standard Paragraph F at the end of this notice.

##### 2. Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation

[Docket No. CP96-25-000]

Take notice that on October 13, 1995, Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation (Applicant), 1700 MacCorkle Avenue, S.E., Charleston, West Virginia 25314-1599, filed under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act for a certificate authorizing the construction and operation of 0.1 mile of 36-inch pipeline loop, on its transmission line, all as more fully described in the petition on file with the Commission and open to public inspection.