

potential source must be able to provide NEPOOL with energy and/or capacity benefits which are comparable to those provided by the proposed tie-line. Such purchases would not be possible from existing sources. In addition, the New York Power Pool (NYPP), a contiguous utility system that is a potential source of purchased power for NEPOOL members, is a competitor of NEPOOL for the energy available in Canada and the coal-fired energy in the midwestern United States. Therefore, purchase of power from NYPP was not considered a viable alternative to the proposed project.

The Midwest is another potential source of purchased power because of its surplus of non-oil-fired capacity. Factors that precluded consideration of this source as a viable alternative to the proposed action are as follows:

- Load and capacity projections indicate that the present capacity surpluses would not last long enough to sustain a firm energy sale to NEPOOL through the 1990s.

- Any available surpluses are likely to be purchased by utilities in regions with existing direct transmission connections.

- Any power purchased must flow through the central New York State and Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland (PJM) systems. The transmission systems in these areas are already heavily used and could not readily withstand the additional load imposed by transmitting midwestern energy to New England.

- The construction of additional transmission lines through New York or the states of the PJM systems could encounter various regulatory, legal, and environmental obstacles that could prevent or delay implementation and raise the final cost of the energy.

Installing the transmission line underground and alternative structure designs were also considered. The environmental impacts and construction costs of installing the transmission line underground would be greater than those for the proposed project, and the reliability would be lower than that of an overhead system. The wood H-frame structure was chosen largely because of economic considerations, and because the impacts caused by most structure types would be similar. The primary impacts associated with an underground system that precluded it from consideration as a viable alternative included (1) extensive excavation, grading, and backfilling; (2) potential for oil contamination of soils; (3) disruption of land use patterns along the entire length of the route; (4) limitation on land uses allowed over or near the

route; (5) instream disturbance of all waterways crossed by the route; (6) potential for oil spills or leaks into surface water and wetlands; (7) potential for oil contamination of groundwater; (8) decreased habitat diversity along the route because the area would have to be maintained as grasses; (9) increased potential for damage to surface and subsurface archaeological sites; and (10) increased worker safety concerns because of the increased construction and maintenance activities that would be required.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Upon completion of a thorough review of all proposed alternatives, DOE has concluded that construction of the Stud Mill Road route is the environmentally preferred alternative and that adequate safeguards of the environment can be accomplished using mitigation measures identified in the EIS as well as the standard practices of utility companies constructing and maintaining ROW. With approximately 83 miles of transmission line to be sited within Maine, the Stud Mill Road route is the shortest when compared to the 106 mile Existing Line and 115 mile Straight-Line routes. The preferred route would require the fewest transmission structures with the greatest spacing. The preferred route would require the least amount of forest clearing, stream crossings and new service road construction due to use of existing service roads and timber haul roads that traverse the route. Construction of the transmission line along the preferred route will have the least impact to wildlife species due to the reduced amount of vegetation clearing. Where the proposed alternative will parallel existing 345-kV transmission facilities, interactions between the phases (conductors) of the existing and proposed line will decrease magnetic field exposure to residents located near the two-line corridor. Application of the No Action alternative would likely have a negative impact on air quality in the region as a result of continued or increased fossil fuel use in the New England region. The technology for use of nonconventional generation sources in place of the proposed facilities is not considered to have advanced sufficiently to provide the energy resources required today. Construction of a new, non-oil-fired generating plant, would require an extensive design and construction phase and would clearly have significant negative environmental impacts especially in terms of air emissions.

Decision

DOE will issue Presidential Permit PP-89 to BHE for the construction, connection, operation, and maintenance of a 345-kV transmission line across the international border between the United States, at Baileyville, Maine, and Canada for interconnection with facilities of the New Brunswick Power Commission in New Brunswick, Canada. In the United States, the transmission line will follow the Stud Mill Road route, as described in Presidential Permit PP-89. As a condition of granting the Presidential permit, BHE will be required to implement all mitigative measures to which BHE has committed, as presented in the EIS. This conditional requirement shall be deemed adequate mitigation protection to satisfy the requirements for a Mitigation Action Plan (10 CFR 1021.331).

Copies of this Record of Decision will be made available upon request, for public inspection and copying at the Department of Energy, Room 3F-090, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on January 18, 1996.

Anthony J. Como,

Director, Office of Coal & Electricity, Office of Fuels Programs, Office of Fossil Energy.
[FR Doc. 96-1070 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Privatization of Isotope Activities; Comment Request

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of rescheduling of public meeting.

SUMMARY: DOE published a Notice in the December 5, 1995 Commerce Business Daily and December 11, 1995 Federal Register seeking Expressions of Interest concerning the possible privatization of DOE isotope activities. The Notice was to remain effective until February 23, 1996, responses were due by February 23, 1996, and an information meeting was to be held at the DOE facility auditorium in Germantown, Maryland, on January 10, 1996. Due to severe weather, the information meeting was not held. This Notice announces a change in public meeting dates.

DATES: The Notice seeking Expressions of Interest concerning the possible privatization of DOE isotope activities will now remain effective until March 29, 1996. Responses may be submitted

at any time prior to March 29, 1996. An information meeting addressing this notice will be held at the DOE facility auditorium in Germantown, Maryland, from 9:00 a.m. until noon on February 13, 1996. Information packages distributed during the February 13, 1996, meeting will be made available to interested parties after February 14, 1996. Submit requests to the programmatic information contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: All information, other than the dates, presented in the December 1995 Notice remains the same. Requests for information should be directed to: Mr. Owen W. Lowe, U.S. Department of Energy, Isotope Production and Distribution, NE-70 (GTN), 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874, (301) 903-5161.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on January 18, 1996.

Owen W. Lowe,

Associate Director for Isotope Production and Distribution, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology.

[FR Doc. 96-1068 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP96-52-000]

Pine Needle LNG Company, LLC; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Pine Needle LNG Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues and Notice of Technical Conference and Site Visits

January 19, 1996.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the facilities proposed in the Pine Needle LNG Project. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary and whether to approve the project.¹

Summary of the Proposed Project

Pine Needle LNG Company, LLC (Pine Needle), is seeking approval to construct and operate a liquefied natural gas (LNG) production and storage

¹ Pine Needle LNG Company, LLC's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

facility approximately 13 miles northwest of Greensboro in Guilford County, North Carolina. The purpose of the facility is to meet winter peak shaving requirements of several customers, including Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc., Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc., North Carolina Natural Gas Corporation, and the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia.

The primary components of the LNG facility would include:

- Two double-wall, suspended-deck LNG storage tanks, each with a gas-equivalent capacity of 2 billion cubic feet;
- A pretreatment and liquefaction system with the capacity of 20 million cubic feet per day (MMcfd);
- A boil-off recompression system;
- A vaporization and sendout system with the capacity of 400 MMcfd;
- 1.05 miles of 10- and 24-inch-diameter pipelines;
- Fire protection systems; and
- A 54.5 acre-foot firewater pond and earthen dam.

The storage tanks would be approximately 161 feet in height and 206 feet in diameter. Each storage tank would be surrounded by a 30-foot high earthen dike to form individual spill containment areas sized to hold 150 percent of the volume of LNG contained within each tank. The proposed project facilities would be designed, constructed, and maintained to comply with the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Safety Standards for Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities (49 CFR Part 193). The facilities constructed at the site would also meet the National Fire Protection Association 59A LNG standards.

Natural gas would be delivered to and from the LNG facility through a 10-inch-diameter inlet pipeline and a 24-inch-diameter outlet pipeline, respectively. These pipelines would be constructed from the LNG facility to Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation's Mainline transmission system, a distance of 1.05 miles. A new 1.6-mile-long, 100 kV transmission powerline would be provided by Duke Power Company to supply power for a step-down substation at the proposed LNG facility. The majority of this powerline would be constructed parallel and adjacent to the new pipelines.

The proposed LNG facility would be accessed during construction and operation using a 3,900-foot-long road extending from the facility eastward to a public road. The location of the proposed Pine Needle LNG Project is shown in appendix 1.²

² The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the Federal Register. Copies are

Land Requirements for Construction

The proposed facilities would affect approximately 86.6 acres of an 828-acre site. Pine Needle would permanently clear approximately 57.9 acres for the LNG facility site and security buffer, 10.0 acres for the firewater pond and associated dam, 6.4 acres for the new pipeline right-of-way, and 3.0 acres for the permanent access road. An additional 9.5 acres would be temporarily disturbed during construction but would be allowed to revert back to its original condition following construction.

The EA Process/Environmental Issues

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. 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 EA and whether an EIS is necessary. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the 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 EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- Geology and Soils.
 - Seismology and soil liquefaction.
 - Effect of blasting.
 - Erosion control.
 - Facility site and right-of-way restoration.
- Water Resources.
 - Groundwater withdrawal and discharge to surrounding surface waters.
 - Effect of dam and pond construction on Rock Branch and downstream flows.
 - The directional drilling of the Haw River and the potential to affect water quality and riparian resources.
- Biological Resources.

available from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.