

Land Requirements for Construction

The project would require about 900 acres of land. The proposed gas pipelines would be partly built adjacent to existing pipeline or electric transmission line rights-of-way (ROW). The construction ROW would typically be 100 feet wide consisting of a 50-foot-wide permanent ROW and a 50-foot-wide temporary ROW. The construction ROW would serve as a multiple use ROW comprising gas pipelines, brine pipelines, freshwater pipelines, and fuel gas pipelines were applicable. Following construction, the disturbed area would be restored and the 50 feet of temporary ROW would be allowed to revert to its former land use.

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. 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. All comments received are taken into account during the preparation of the EA.

We intend to use but not duplicate work of other agencies to the greatest extent possible. The water intake at the Cowanesque Reservoir is under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore, Maryland District Office. The leaching process and subsurface brine disposal are under joint jurisdiction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). Land disposal permitting is also required by the PADEP. 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
- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- vegetation and wildlife
- endangered and threatened species
- Noise impacts
- land use
- cultural resources
- hazardous waste

- public safety

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, 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 EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the 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 EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we recommend that the Commission approve or not approve the project.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by NE Hub.

- 46 streams would be crossed and some of them are coldwater fisheries that support trout.
- 58 wetlands would be crossed totalling about 30.8 acres.
- Federal and state-listed threatened or endangered species may be affected.
- The project may impact cultural resources.
- Potential land disposal of 2,200 cubic yards of solid material (brine filter cake) may occur from the brine leaching process used to develop two caverns. The brine filter cake may be mixed into the top 2 feet of soil and spread over 9.4 acres.
- Noise impacts would occur to nearby residences from the operation of the compressor station, water and brine pumping equipment, well drilling, and the rail car loading station.
- A pipeline and evaporation plant may be constructed that would be associated with the potential salt business at an undetermined location near the project area.

The list of issues may be added to, subtracted from, or changed based on your comments and our analysis.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter with your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal (including alternative routes), 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 property recorded:

- Address your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426;
 - Reference Docket No. CP96-53-000;
 - Send a *copy* of your letter to: Mr. John Wisniewski, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; 888 First St., N.E., PR-11.2, Washington, D.C. 20426; and
 - Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before May 28, 1996.
- If you wish to receive a copy of the EA, you should request one from Mr. Wisniewski 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) (see appendix 2).

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding has passed. Therefore, parties now seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by section 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues have been viewed as good cause for late intervention. You do not need intervenor status to have your scoping comments considered.

Additional information about the proposed project is available from Mr. John Wisniewski, EA Project Manager, at (202) 208-1073.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-11065 Filed 5-2-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

[Docket No. CP96-57-000]

Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment for the Proposed 1996 Zone EF Expansion Project

April 29, 1996.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) has prepared an

environmental assessment (EA) on the natural gas pipeline facilities proposed by Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) in the above-referenced docket.

The EA was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. The staff concludes that approval of the proposed project, with appropriate mitigating measures, would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Northern wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in Minnesota and Wisconsin to transport an additional 46, 400 million British thermal units per day of natural gas to six local distribution companies.

Northern seeks authority to:

- Abandon the 10,600-horsepower (hp) Owatonna Compressor Station in Steele County, Minnesota and construct and operate a new 10,600-hp Fairbault Compressor Station in Rice County, Minnesota;
- Extend its 30-inch-diameter C-line Extension by about 2.24 miles in Washington County, Minnesota;
- Increase the capacity of its Elk River system by extending the existing 20-inch-diameter Elk River Loop in two areas for a total of about 3.30 miles in Anoka County, Minnesota;
- Construct about 14.52 miles of 6-inch-diameter tie-over connecting the Paynesville and the Watkins branchlines in Stearns County, Minnesota;
- Install: (a) about 3.07 miles of 4-inch-diameter St. Michael Loop in Wright County, Minnesota; (b) about 5.01 miles of 8-inch-diameter Princeton Loop in Mille Lacs and Sherburne counties, Minnesota; and (c) about 1.96 miles of 4-inch-diameter Monticello Loop in Wright County, Minnesota;
- Modify three meter stations in Anoka County, Minnesota and two meter stations in Wright County, Minnesota; and
- Modify a meter station in St. Croix County, Wisconsin and a meter station in Buffalo County, Wisconsin.

The EA has been placed in the public files of the FERC and is available for public inspection at: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426, (202) 208-1371.

Copies of the EA have been mailed to Federal, state and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, newspapers, and parties to this proceeding.

A limited number of copies of the EA are available from: Mr. Robert Kopka, Environmental Project Manager,

Environmental Review and Compliance Branch I, Office of Pipeline Regulation, PR-11.1, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426, (202) 208-0282.

Any person wishing to comment on the EA may do so. Written comments must reference Docket No. CP96-57-000, and be addressed to: Office of the Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426.

Comments should be filed as soon as possible, but must be received no later than May 28, 1996, to ensure consideration prior to a Commission decision on this proposal. A copy of any comments should also be sent to Mr. Robert Kopka, Environmental Project Manager, at the above address.

Comments will be considered by the Commission but will not serve to make the commentator a party to the proceeding. Any person seeking to become a party to the proceeding must file a motion to intervene pursuant to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedures (18 CFR 385.214).

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding has passed. Therefore, parties now seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by section 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues have been viewed as good cause for late intervention. You do not need intervenor status to have your comments considered.

Additional information about this project is available from Mr. Robert Kopka, Environmental Project Manager. Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-11053 Filed 5-2-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

Notice of Application for Major New License

April 29, 1996.

Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection:

- a. Type of Application: Major New License.
- b. Project No.: 1984-056.
- c. Date filed: January 25, 1996.
- d. Applicant: Wisconsin River Power Company.
- e. Name of Project: Petenwell-Castle Rock Project.
- f. Location: On the Wisconsin River in Adams, Juneau, and Wood Counties, Wisconsin.
- g. Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act 16 U.S.C. §§ 791(a)-825(t).

h. Applicant Contact: Mr. Richard L. Hilliker, President, Wisconsin River Power Company, P.O. Box 8050, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495, (715) 422-3722.

i. FERC Contact: Robert Bell (202) 219-2806.

j. Comment Date: July 1, 1996.

k. Status of Environmental Analysis: This application is accepted for filing but is not ready for environmental analysis at this time—see attached standard paragraph E1.

l. Description of Project: The constructed project consists of the following developments:

Petenwell Development

(1) the Petenwell Dam consists of a series of dams and dikes 15,505 feet long and approximately 38 feet high; (2) an impoundment having a surface area of 25,180 acres, with a storage capacity of 495,000 acre-feet at normal water surface elevation of 923.9 feet msl; (3) an intake structure; (4) a powerhouse having 4 generating units having a total installed capacity of 20-MW; (5) a transmission line; and (6) appurtenant facilities.

Castle Rock Development

(1) the Castle Rock Dam consist of a series of dams and dikes 19,374 feet long and approximately 30 feet high; (2) an impoundment having a surface area of 14,900 acres and storage capacity of 136,000 acre-feet at normal water surface elevation of 881.9 feet msl; (3) an intake structure; (4) a powerhouse having 5 generating units having a total installed capacity of 15-MW; (5) a transmission line; and (6) appurtenant facilities.

No additional capacity is being proposed for this project under this new license.

m. Purpose of Project: Project power would be utilized for sale to Wisconsin River Power Company's customers.

n. This notice also consists of the following standard paragraphs: B1 and E1.

o. Available Location of Application: A copy of the application, as amended and supplemented, is available for inspection and reproduction at the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, located at 888 North Capitol Street, Washington, D.C., 20426, or by calling (202) 208-1371. A copy is also available for inspection and reproduction at Mr. Richard L. Hilliker, President, Wisconsin River Power Company, P.O. Box 8050, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495, (715) 422-3722.

B1. Protests or Motions to Intervene—Anyone may submit a protest or a