

filed within the time required herein, if the Commission on its own review of the matter finds that a grant of the certificate is required by the public convenience and necessity. If motion for leave to intervene is timely filed or if the Commission and its own motion believes that a formal hearing is required, further notice of such hearing will be duly given.

Under the procedure herein provided for, unless otherwise advised, it will be unnecessary for WPSC to appear or be represented at the hearing.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-20528 Filed 8-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP97-563-000]

Michigan Gas Storage Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

July 30, 1997.

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 Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East Project.¹ This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Michigan Gas Storage Company (MGSCO) proposes to replace and upgrade 1.3 miles of its Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East. To accomplish this activity MGSCO proposes to: (1) Remove 0.6 mile of 6-inch-diameter piping and replace it in the same trench with 8-inch-diameter piping; (2) abandon in place 0.1 mile of 4-inch-diameter piping; (3) install a 2-inch-diameter pipe within the abandoned 4-inch-diameter pipe; (4) upgrade the existing 0.6 mile of 8-inch-diameter pipeline to make it piggable by removing stab-in branch connections at well laterals as well as any other obstructions from the pipe

¹ Michigan Gas Storage Company's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

interior; and (5) install a pig launcher and pig receiver at either end of the reconfigured 8-inch-diameter piping segment. The resulting lateral would consist of about 1.2 miles of 8-inch-diameter and 0.1 mile of 2-inch-diameter piping.

All of the facilities are located in Clare County, Michigan. The proposed project would allow for more efficient and safe operation of MGSCO's Cranberry Lake Storage Field.

The proposed facilities would cost about \$257,400.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.² If you are interested in obtaining procedural information, please write to the Secretary of the Commission.

Land Requirements for Construction

Replacement and upgrading of the Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East, including temporary work spaces, would require about 3.5 acres. Of the 3.5 acres, about 1.7 acres exist as a two-track sand road which has no vegetation. Of the remaining 1.8 acres, about 1.7 acres of land would require tree trimming and vegetation removal and about 0.1 acre of land would require tree removal.

MGSCO would utilize its abandoned Plant 1 Compressor Station for receiving and distributing materials during construction. The total acreage for the lay-down area is about 3 acres. This area has been previously devoted to industrial use and no further disturbance is required.

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 considered during the preparation of the EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents

²The 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, D.C. 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

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
- Land use
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- Cultural resources
- Vegetation and wildlife
- Endangered and threatened species
- 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 make our recommendations to the Commission.

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 MGSCO. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East is located near the Kirkland's Warbler National Wildlife Refuge.
- Cranberry Lake Lateral 63 East is located within the Gladwin Forest Area of the Au Sable State Forest.

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 (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 properly recorded:

- Send two copies of your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Room 1A, Washington, D.C., 20426;
- Label one of the comments for the attention of the Environmental Review and Compliance Branch, PR-11.2;
- Reference Docket No. CP97-563-000; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before August 30, 1997.

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 not seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by § 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.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,
Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-20527 Filed 8-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP97-92-001]

Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Mobile Bay Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

July 30, 1997.

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, about 75.66 miles of 24- and

30-inch-diameter pipeline, 30,000 horsepower (hp) of compression, an offshore junction platform and connecting facilities at another (nonjurisdictional) platform, proposed in the Mobile Bay Project.¹ This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation (Transco) wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and Alabama to transport an additional 350 million cubic feet of natural gas per day (Mmcf) to the interstate market from sources offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. Transco seeks authority to construct and operate:

- 15,000 horsepower (hp) of compression at new Compressor Station 83 in Mobile County, Alabama;
- 15,000 hp of additional compression at Compressor Station 82 in Mobile County, Alabama;
- 19.08 miles of 30-inch-diameter pipeline from existing Compressor Station 82 in Mobile County, Alabama to a new offshore junction platform in Mobile Block 822 (this segment involves approximately 4.00 miles of onshore pipeline);
- a new offshore junction platform in Mobile Block 822, including a 24-inch-sphere launcher and appurtenant facilities;
- 56.58 miles of 24-inch-diameter pipeline from the new offshore junction platform in Mobile Block 822 to a new platform (owned by SOCO Offshore, Inc. (SOCO)) in Main Pass Viosca Knoll Block 261; and
- a 24-inch-sphere launcher, measurement equipment, riser pipe and appurtenant facilities on SOCO's new platform in Main Pass Viosca Knoll Block 261.

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.² If you are interested in obtaining procedural information, please write to the Secretary of the Commission.

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed onshore facilities would require about 56.4 acres

of land. Following construction, about 15.7 acres would be maintained as new aboveground facility sites. The remaining 40.7 acres of land would be restored; 17.4 acres would be allowed to revert to its former use and 23.3 acres would be permanent pipeline right-of-way.

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 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 onshore portion of the proposed project under these general headings:³

- Geology and soils
- Land use
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- Cultural resources
- Vegetation and wildlife
- Air quality and noise
- Endangered and threatened species
- 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

¹ Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

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³ The Commission intends to adopt the environmental documents created by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service (MMS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for the offshore facilities.