

environmental aspects of the project. This preliminary determination typically considers such issues as the need for the project and its economic effect on existing customers of the applicant, on other pipelines in the area, and on landowners and communities. For example, the Commission considers the extent to which the applicant may need to exercise eminent domain to obtain rights-of-way for the proposed project and balances that against the non-environmental benefits to be provided by the project. Therefore, if a person has comments on community and landowner impacts from this proposal, it is important either to file comments or to intervene as early in the process as possible.

Comments, protests and interventions may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See, 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site under the "e-Filing" link.

If the Commission decides to set the application for a formal hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, the Commission will issue another notice describing that process. At the end of the Commission's review process, a final Commission order approving or denying a certificate will be issued.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 01-30799 Filed 12-12-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket Nos. CP01-176-000 and CP01-179-000]

Georgia Strait Crossing Pipeline LP; Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Georgia Strait Crossing Project

December 7, 2001.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) has prepared a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on natural gas pipeline facilities proposed by Georgia Strait Crossing Pipeline LP (GSX-US) in the above-referenced dockets.

The draft EIS was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The staff concludes that approval of the proposed project, with appropriate mitigating measures as recommended, would have limited adverse

environmental impact. The draft EIS also evaluates alternatives to the proposal, including system alternatives, route alternatives, and route variations.

The draft EIS addresses the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of the following facilities in Whatcom and San Juan Counties, Washington:

- About 32.0 miles of 20-inch-diameter pipeline (onshore mainline pipeline) extending from the interconnect facilities at the international border between the United States and Canada near Sumas, Washington, across Whatcom County, to a new compressor station (Cherry Point Compressor Station) near Cherry Point, Washington;

- About 1.1 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline (onshore mainline pipeline) extending from the Cherry Point Compressor Station to the beginning of the marine portion of the pipeline at the edge of the Strait of Georgia;

- About 13.9 miles of 16-inch-diameter marine pipeline (offshore mainline pipeline) extending from the edge of the Strait of Georgia near Cherry Point, Washington to the international border between the United States and Canada at a point about midway between the west end of Patos Island (Washington) and the east end of Saturna Island (British Columbia) in Boundary Pass;

- Interconnect facilities including a receipt point meter station, pig launcher, interconnect piping, and associated valves (Sumas Interconnect Facility) adjacent to the existing Sumas Compressor Station in Whatcom County, Washington;

- A new compressor station (Cherry Point Compressor Station) consisting of one 10,302-hp two-stage compressor unit, pig launcher/receiver facilities, and associated valves near Cherry Point in Whatcom County, Washington;

- Six mainline valves (MLV), one each at the Sumas Interconnect Facility and Cherry Point Compressor Station and four valves along the proposed pipeline route; and

- An onshore and an offshore tap valve.

The purpose of the GSX-US project is to provide a natural gas transportation system to supply the growing demand for natural gas on Vancouver Island.

Comment Procedures and Public Meetings

Any person wishing to comment on the EIS may do so. To ensure consideration prior to a Commission decision on the proposal, it is important that we receive your comments before the date specified below. Please

carefully follow these instructions to ensure that your comments are received in time and are properly recorded:

- Send an original and two copies of your comments to: Linwood A. Watson, Jr., Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426.

- Reference Docket Nos. CP01-176-000.

- Label one copy of your comments for the attention of Gas Group 2, PJ-11.2.

- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before February 4, 2002.

Comments may also be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> under the "e-Filing" link and the link to the User's Guide. Before you can file comments you will need to create an account by clicking on "Login to File" and then "New User Account."

Due to current events, we cannot guarantee that we will receive mail on a timely basis from the U.S. Postal Service, and we do not know how long this situation will continue. However, we continue to receive filings from private mail delivery services, including messenger services in a reliable manner. The Commission encourages electronic filing of any comments on this draft EIS. We will include all comments that we receive within a reasonable time frame in our environmental analysis of this project.

We will announce in a future notice, the location and time of at least one local public meeting to receive comments on the draft EIS.

Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to attend and present oral comments on the environmental impacts described in the draft EIS. Transcripts of the meetings will be prepared.

After these comments are reviewed, any significant new issues are investigated, and modifications are made to the draft EIS as necessary, a final EIS will be published and distributed by the staff. The final EIS will contain the staff's responses to timely comments received on the draft EIS.

Comments will be considered by the Commission but will not serve to make the commentor 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 practices and procedures (18 CFR 385.214).

Anyone may intervene in this proceeding based on this draft EIS. You must file your request to intervene as specified above.¹ You do not need intervenor status to have your comments considered.

The draft EIS has been placed in the public files of the FERC and is available for public inspection at: Federal Regulatory Energy Commission, Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, NE., Room 2A, Washington, DC 20426, (202) 208-1371.

A limited number of copies of the draft EIS are available from the Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch identified above. In addition, the draft EIS has been mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, public interest groups, individuals, and affected landowners who requested a copy of the draft EIS; public libraries; newspapers; and parties to this proceeding.

Additional information about the proposed project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs at (202) 208-1088 or on the FERC Web site (www.ferc.gov) using the "RIMS" link to information in the docket numbers. Click on the "RIMS" link, select "Docket#" from the RIMS menu, and follow the instructions. For assistance with access to RIMS, the RIMS helpline can be reached at (202) 208-2222.

Similarly, the "CIPS" link on the FERC internet website provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings. From the FERC Internet Web site, click on the "CIPS" link, select "Docket#" from the CIPS menu, and follow the instructions. For assistance with access to CIPS, the CIPS helpline can be reached at (202) 208-2474.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 01-30796 Filed 12-12-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice of Applications Acceptance for Filing, Soliciting Motions To Intervene and Protests, Ready for Environmental Analysis, and Soliciting Comments, Recommendations, Terms and Conditions, and Prescriptions

December 7, 2001.

Take notice that the following hydroelectric applications have been filed with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

a. *Type of Applications:* Three new major licenses.

b. *Project Nos.:* 1982-017, 2567-009, and 2670-014.

c. *Date Filed:* June 21, 1996, June 22, 1998, and August 24, 1998, respectively.

d. *Applicant:* Northern States Power Company (NSP).

e. *Names of Projects:* Holcombe, Wissota, and Dells.

f. *Location:* On the Chippewa River in Chippewa, Rusk, and Eau Claire Counties, Wisconsin. The Holcombe and Wissota projects do not utilize any federal lands, but the Dells Project utilizes 6.6 acres of federal lands, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

g. *Filed Pursuant to:* Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. 791(a)-825(r).

h. *Applicant Contact:* Mr. Lloyd Everhart, Northern States Power Company, 100 North Barstow Street, P.O. Box 8, Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008, 715-839-2692.

i. *FERC Contact:* Mark Pawlowski; mark.pawlowski@ferc.fed.us, 202-219-2795.

j. *Deadline for Filing Comments, Motions to Intervene, Recommendations, Terms and Conditions, and Prescriptions:* 60 days from the issuance date of this notice.

All documents (original and eight copies) should be filed with: Linwood A. Watson, Jr., Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426. Comments, protests and interventions may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See, 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site under the "e-Filing" link.

The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all interveners filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that

may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, the intervenor also must serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

k. *Status of Environmental Analysis:* These applications have been accepted for filing and are ready for environmental analysis at this time.

l. *Description of the Projects* (from upstream to downstream):

The Holcombe Project consists of: (1) Four earthen embankments that include: The 700-foot-long North Dike and 200-foot-long South Dike, which are part of the Holcombe Dam; and the 4,600-foot-long Holcombe Dike and 1,900-foot-long Callahan Dike, which serve as flood control measures and are normally "dry" under normal operations; (2) an impoundment with a maximum surface area of 4,300 acres, a normal water surface elevation of 1045.0 feet NGVD, 46,000 acre-feet of gross storage, and 4,300 acre-feet of usable storage under normal operations; (3) a powerhouse containing 6 vertical propeller-type turbine-generating units with a total installed capacity of 33,000 kW; (4) a 462-foot-long reinforced and mass concrete spillway equipped with 13, 30-foot-wide steel tainter gates; (5) an outdoor substation that directly connects to the NSP systemwide transmission network; and (6) appurtenant facilities. The average annual energy production is 94,021,000 kWh.

The Wissota Project consists of: (1) Six earthen embankments totaling about 7,300 feet long, and a 165-foot-long gravity dam; (2) a 904-foot-long concrete overflow spillway with 13 Stauwerke flap gates, each 64 feet wide by 10.5 feet high; (3) a 6,212-acre reservoir with a normal surface elevation of 897.1 feet NGVD, and a gross storage capacity of 162,971 acre-feet; (4) a powerhouse containing 6 vertical Francis turbine-generator units for a total installed capacity of 36,000 kW; (4) an outdoor substation that directly connects to the NSP systemwide transmission network; and (5) appurtenant facilities. The average annual energy generation is 149,392,471 kWh.

The Dells Project consists of: (1) A 396-foot-long concrete gated spillway dam with 13 Tainter gates; (2) an impoundment with a maximum surface area of 1,183 acres, a normal water surface elevation of 794.4 feet NGVD, 11,158 acre-feet of gross storage, and 2,000 acre-feet of usable storage under normal operations; (3) powerhouse A containing 5 turbine-generator units with a total installed capacity of 8,400 kW; (3) powerhouse B containing 2 turbine-generators with a total installed capacity of 1,100 kW; (4) a 1,884-foot-

¹ Interventions may also be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See the previous discussion on filing comments electronically.