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**Lois D. Cashell,**

*Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 11553-000 Alaska]

#### Lace River Hydroelectric Project; Notice of Intent To Conduct Environmental Scoping Meetings and a Site Visit

April 7, 1997.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 allows applicants to prepare their own environmental assessment (EA) for hydropower projects and file it with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) along with their license application as part of the "applicant-prepared EA" process. Lace River Hydro (LRH) intends to prepare an EA to file with the Commission for the proposed Lace River Hydroelectric Project. LRH will hold an environmental scoping meeting, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, to identify the scope of issues that should be analyzed in the EA.

#### Scoping Meeting

The time and location of the joint public and agency scoping meeting is:

*Date:* Thursday, May 1, 1997.

*Place:* Alaska Division of Governmental Coordination, Court Plaza Building, 240 Main Street, Suite 300, Juneau, Alaska.

*Time:* 12:00 p.m. (noon).

At the scoping meetings, LRH will: (1) Summarize the tentative environmental issues and concerns on the project, (2) outline those preliminary resources that they believe would not require a detailed analysis, (3) identify reasonable alternatives to be addressed in the EA, (4) solicit from the meeting participants all available baseline information, especially quantitative data, on the resource issues, and (5) encourage statements from experts and the public on issues that should be analyzed in the EA, including views supporting or opposing AP&T's preliminary views.

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited and encouraged to attend either or both meetings to assist in identifying and clarifying the scope of environmental issues that should be analyzed in the EA.

To help focus discussions at the meetings, LRH will prepare and distribute to the participants prior to the meetings, the Initial Consultation Package and Scoping Document 1 for this project. Copies of this scoping document can be obtained by calling Mr. Earle V. Ausman of LRH at (907) 258-2420, or can be obtained directly at either meeting.

#### Site Visit

LRH will also conduct a site visit to the proposed Lace River Project on Wednesday, April 30, 1997. Those attending must meet at the Echo Bay (at the end of the road) by 10 a.m. and promptly leave for the project site, via floatplane. Because of the remoteness, snowpack that time of the year, and difficulty of ground access at the proposed project site, a flyover would provide an efficient view of the site. Those attending the site visit should be physically fit, must wear warm clothing and hip waders, and may be asked to sign a waiver of liability regarding floatplane use.

To charter enough floatplanes in advance of the visit, LRH must identify the number of individuals interested in flying over the project site. Therefore, if you intend on visiting the proposed project site, you *must* first register with Mr. Earle V. Ausman of LRH at (907) 258-2420 no later than April 24, 1997. If inclement weather prevents a site visit on April 30th, the alternate site visit will be Friday, May 2nd at the same time.

#### Meeting Procedures

The meetings will be conducted according to the procedures used at Commission scoping meetings. Because this meeting will be a NEPA scoping meeting under the APEA process, the Commission will not conduct a NEPA scoping meeting after the application and draft EA are filed with the Commission.

The scoping meeting will be recorded by a stenographer, and thus will become a part of the formal record of the proceedings for this project.

Those who choose not to speak during the scoping meeting may instead submit written comments on the project. Written comments should be mailed to: Mr. Earle V. Ausman, Lace River Hydro, 1503 West 33rd Avenue, Suite 310, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. All correspondence should show the following caption on the first page: Scoping Comments, Lace River Hydroelectric Project, Project No. 11553-000, Alaska.

For further information, please contact Mr. Earle V. Ausman at (907)

258-2420 or Mr. Carl Keller of the Commission at (202) 219-2831.

**Lois D. Cashell,**

*Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP97-223-000]

#### Southern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Montgomery-Columbus Abandonment and Replacement Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

April 7, 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 abandonment of 87.4 miles of natural gas transmission pipeline and the construction and operation of 5.5 miles of natural gas transmission pipeline, proposed in the Montgomery-Columbus Abandonment and Replacement Project.<sup>1</sup> 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

Southern Natural Gas Company (Southern) wants to abandon certain of its facilities in Alabama and replace a portion of its facilities that have deteriorated. The proposed abandonment and construction will not affect Southern's service obligations. Southern seeks authority to abandon in place:

- The 12-inch-diameter Montgomery-Columbus Mainline from milepost (MP) 79.709 to MP 143.289 in Dallas, Autauga, and Elmore Counties. This would include the removal of the East Flow Regulator/Meter Station at MP 81.401, and block valves, gate valves, and taps along the mainline;
- The 12-inch-diameter Montgomery-Columbus Loop between MP 81.209 and MP 100.729 in Dallas, Autauga, and Elmore Counties. Southern would also remove a tap and gate valves; and

<sup>1</sup>Southern Natural Gas Company's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

- The 6-inch-diameter Selma Pipeline between MP 0.0 and MP 4.338 in Dallas County.

Southern seeks authority to construct and operate:

- About 4.04 miles of 30-inch-diameter loop pipeline from MP 261.00 to MP 265.04 along the South Main System in Macon County;

- About 1.5 miles of 30-inch-diameter loop pipeline along the South Main System from MP 183.657 and MP 185.167 in Dallas County.

- About 500 feet of 6-inch-diameter pipeline within the existing right-of-way to tie-in the Selma Tap and Selma Loop, and install a regulator at the Selma Tap at MP 83.420;

- Gas heaters at MPs 109.733, 116.919, 120.963, and 142.970 on the South Main System; and

- Appurtenant facilities, including connecting active taps presently tied into the pipelines being abandoned to its adjacent pipelines (to maintain service).

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup> If you are interested in obtaining procedural information please write at the Secretary of the Commission.

#### Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 37.23 acres of land. Following construction, about 14.69 acres would be maintained as new right-of-way. The remaining 22.54 acres of land would be restored and allowed to revert to its former 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 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;
- Water resources, fisheries; and wetlands
- Vegetation and wildlife;
- Endangered and threatened species;
- Land use;
- Cultural resources;
- Air quality and noise;
- 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 Southern.

- One residence is within 50 feet of the construction right-of-way at MP 263.469.

- Five perennial streams are crossed by the new facilities.

- About 19.8 acres of forest (9.2 acres of upland forest, 7.2 acres of pine plantation, and 3.4 acres of forested wetlands) would be cleared for construction of the new facilities.

- About 35.4 acres of wetlands would be disturbed. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

#### 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 (and send two copies) to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426;
- Reference Docket No. CP97-223-000; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before May 7, 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 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.

**Lois D. Cashell,**

Secretary.

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-5809-4]

**Request for Comments: National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, Subpart J; Agency Information Collection Activities up for Renewal (OMB Control Number: 2050-0141)**

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C.

<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.