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Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

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[Docket No. CP97-156-000]

**Hopkinton LNG Corporation; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Hopkinton LNG Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues**

January 21, 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 operation of facilities at the Hopkinton, Massachusetts LNG Plant. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary and whether to approve the project.<sup>1</sup>

**Summary of the Proposed Project**

Hopkinton LNG Corporation (Hopkinton) is seeking approval to operate in interstate commerce an existing liquefied natural gas (LNG) peak-shaving facility located in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. The facility is owned by Hopkinton and operated and maintained by Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (APCI). The LNG facility is currently operated to provide LNG storage, liquefaction, and vaporization services to Commonwealth Gas Company (Commonwealth), Hopkinton's affiliated local distribution company. Commonwealth no longer needs as much of Hopkinton's capacity to support its local distribution operations as it has in the past. Therefore, Hopkinton requests authorization to lease to COM/Energy Resources, Inc. (Resources), its affiliated marketing company, the capacity in the Hopkinton LNG facility that is not required by Hopkinton to serve Commonwealth on a firm basis. Resources would use the leased capacity to support its own natural gas marketing activities and would not provide any LNG storage, liquefaction, or vaporization services to third parties.

**Existing Facilities**

The Hopkinton LNG Plant was constructed in 1967 and consists of natural gas liquefaction, LNG storage, and LNG revaporization facilities. The plant was designed to supply Commonwealth's gas utility needs by liquefying and storing natural gas in the summer for revaporization during peak periods in the winter heating season. The Hopkinton LNG Plant has a design liquefaction rate of 17 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) and a sendout capacity of 240 MMCFD. The LNG is stored in three 290,000-barrel LNG storage tanks.

The Hopkinton LNG Plant receives gas for liquefaction and storage through the facilities of Tennessee Gas Pipeline. Although not used to date, the plant is also able to receive gas through the facilities of Algonquin Gas Transmission. Additionally, the plant can receive LNG by tanker truck.

**Proposed Facilities**

Hopkinton does not propose any new facilities or any modifications to existing facilities. The Hopkinton LNG Plant would continue to be operated and maintained by APCI on behalf of Hopkinton.

The location of the Hopkinton LNG Plant is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup>

**Land Requirements for Construction**

No additional land is required since Hopkinton does not propose any additions or modifications to the existing facility.

**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

<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, NE, Washington, DC 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.

Because the LNG plant is an existing facility and no new additions or modifications are proposed, the EA will focus on the operation of the proposed project, the cryogenic design aspects of the plant, and public safety including LNG trucking.

Prior to finalizing the EA, the FERC staff will meet with representatives of Hopkinton (time and location to be noticed at a later date) to conduct a cryogenic design and engineering review of the LNG facility at Hopkinton, Massachusetts.

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.

**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 to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Washington, DC 20426;
- Reference Docket No. CP97-156-000;
- Send a copy of your letter to: Mr. James Dashukewich, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Room 71-44, Washington, DC 20426; and
- Mail your comments so that they are received in Washington, DC on or before February 14, 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 an "intervenor". Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related

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

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).

Filing of timely motions to intervene in this proceeding should be made on or before February 14, 1997. Once this date has passed, parties 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.

If you are interested in obtaining detailed maps of this project, or procedural information, contact Mr. James Dashukewich, EA Project Manager, at (202) 208-0117.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

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[Docket No. CP97-93-000]

**Viking Gas Transmission Company;  
Notice of Intent to Prepare an  
Environmental Assessment for the  
Proposed Viking 1997 Expansion  
Project and Request for Comments on  
Environmental Issues**

January 21, 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 29.4 miles of 24-inch diameter loop, 23,500 horsepower (hp) of compression, and a meter station, proposed in the Viking 1997 Expansion Project.<sup>1</sup> This EA will be used by the Commission in its decisionmaking process to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary and whether to approve the project.

**Summary of the Proposed Project**

Viking Gas Transmission Company (Viking) wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in Minnesota to transport an additional 61,300 dekatherms per day of natural gas to various customers including a municipal utility, a local

distribution company, marketers, and other end users. Viking seeks authority to construct and operate the following facilities in Minnesota:

- 9.1 miles of loop in Kittson County;
- 11.9 miles of loop in Polk County;
- 7.1 miles of loop in Norman and Clay Counties;
- The Perham Meter Station in Otter Tail County;
- Piping and valves at various existing facilities;
- Crossover assemblies at the end of each new loop;
- 4,700 horsepower (hp) of compression at each of the following existing compressor stations:
  - Angus Compressor Station in Polk County;
  - Ada Compressor Station in Norman County;
  - Frazee Compressor Station in Otter Tail County;
  - Staples Compressor Station in Todd County; and
  - Milaca Compressor Station in Mille Lacs County

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup> If you are interested in obtaining detailed maps of a specific portion of the project, or procedural information, contact the Project Manager identified at the end of this notice.

**Land Requirements for Construction**

Construction of the loops would require about 355 acres of land, including about 302 acres of existing right-of-way. No new permanent right-of-way would be required for this proposal. All construction at the compression stations would take place within the existing fenced yard. The new Perham Meter Station would require about 0.3 acre of land. Following construction, all areas would be restored and allowed to revert to their former use, except for the Perham Meter Station.

**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.
- Public safety.
- Land use.
- Cultural resources.
- Air quality and noise.
- Hazardous waste.

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

- A total of 345.3 acres of agricultural land, of which 341 acres contains prime farmland soils, would be disturbed by construction.
- The impact of noise on residences near the five compressor stations.

**Public Participation**

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific

<sup>1</sup> Viking Gas Transmission Company'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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