

Copies of this filing were served on SETC, SCEM, DETM, CALT, FETM, RESI, VGE and NME.

Comment date: May 4, 1999, in accordance with Standard Paragraph E at the end of this notice.

Standard Paragraphs

E. Any person desiring to be heard or to protest such filing should file a motion to intervene or protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and 385.214). All such motions or protests should be filed on or before the comment date. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Any person wishing to become a party must file a motion to intervene. Copies of these filings are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection. This filing may also be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.ferc.fed.us/online/rims.htm> (call 202-208-2222 for assistance).

David P. Boergers,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-10319 Filed 4-23-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP99-191-000]

Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Elk River Loop '99 Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

April 13, 1999.

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 Elk River Loop '99 Project involving the construction and operation of facilities by Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) in Anoka and Sherburne Counties, Minnesota.¹ These facilities would consist of about 15 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline loop. 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. The application and other supplemental filings in this docket are available for viewing on the FERC Internet website (www.ferc.fed.us). Click on the "RIMS" link, select "Docket #" from the RIMS Menu, and follow the instructions.

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 website, click on the "CIPS" link, select "Docket #" from the CIPS menu, and follow the instructions.

If you are a landowner receiving this notice, you may be contacted by a pipeline company representative about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities. The pipeline company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if the project is approved by the Commission, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings in accordance with state law. A fact sheet addressing a number of typically asked questions, including the use of eminent domain, is attached to this notice as appendix 1.²

Summary of the Proposed Project

Northern wants to construct and operate 15 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline and appurtenances, to loop the Elk River Branch in Anoka and Sherburne Counties, Minnesota. Northern states that the facilities would allow it to meet third through fifth year Peak Day 2000 firm obligations to Minnegasco, a Division of NorAm Energy Corporation, and to Northern States Power Company—Minnesota.

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 2.

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 192.5 acres of land including 132.4 acres of existing permanent right-of-way (ROW), and 60.1 acres of temporary construction ROW for extra work spaces and storage yards. The new 16-inch pipeline would typically be offset 20 feet from the existing 6-inch to 8-inch-diameter Elk

River Branchline. Northern states that it has existing multiple-line rights with defined and blanket easements for greater than 99 percent of the proposed route, but it would need to acquire new ROW for the loop where it currently has only a single pipeline easement, and/or in areas where it needs temporary extra workspace outside of the existing ROW. Northern proposes to use a 75-foot-wide construction ROW measured from the centerline of its Elk River Branchline on either the north or south side, depending on the location along the route. Extra workspaces would also be used that typically range from 25 by 100 feet to 225 by 300 feet along the ROW. Most of the extra workspaces are located near road and stream crossings.

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
- Public safety
- Land use
- Cultural resources
- Endangered and threatened species

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

¹ Northern's application was filed with the Commission under Section 157.208(b) of the Natural Gas Act, but was protested by the Commission's staff and others, and will convert to a Section 7(c) filing on April 26, 1999.

² 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.

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.

To ensure your comments are considered, please carefully follow the instructions in the public participation section beginning on page 4 of this notice.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified the following issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by Northern. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- Thirty-nine wetlands would be crossed by the project route, with 26.2 acres of potential wetland impacts.
- Seventy residences in the project area would be within 50 feet of the construction ROW.
- One hundred and twelve drinking water supply wells would be within 150 feet of the construction ROW.
- About 9.8 miles of prime farmland soils would be crossed by the project route.
- Alternative route(s) may be available to mitigate impact on sensitive areas.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. By becoming a commentator, your concerns will be addressed in the EA and considered by the Commission. 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 carefully follow these instructions to ensure that your comments are received in time and properly recorded:

- Sent two copies of your letter to: David P. Boergers, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426;
- Label one copy of the comments for the attention of the Environmental Review and Compliance Branch, PR-11.2;
- Reference Docket No. CP99-191-000; and

- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before May 14, 1999.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding known as an "intervenor". Intervenor play a more formal role in the process. 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 14 copies of its filings to the Secretary of the Commission and must send a copy of its filings to all other parties on the Commission's service list for this proceeding. 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 3). Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision. You do not need intervenor status to have your environmental comments considered.

Additional information about the proposed project is available from Mr. Paul McKee of the Commission's Office of External Affairs at (202) 208-1088 or on the FERC website (www.ferc.fed.us) using the "RIMS" link to information in this docket number. For assistance with access to RIMS, the RIMS help line can be reached at (202) 208-2222. Access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission with regard to this docket, such as orders and notices, is also available on the FERC website using the "CHIP" link. For assistance with access to CIPS, the CIPS help line can be reached at (202) 208-2474.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-10336 Filed 4-23-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice of Application for Transfer of License and Soliciting Comments, Motions To Intervene, and Protests

April 19, 1999.

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

- a. *Application Type:* Transfer of License.
- b. *Project No:* 2368-026.

- c. *Date Filed:* March 23, 1999.
- d. *Applicants:* Maine Public Service Company.

- e. *Name of Project:* Squa Pan.
- f. *Location:* On the Colella River, in Aroostook County, Maine. The project does not utilize federal or tribal lands.

- g. *Filed Pursuant to:* 18 CFR 4.200.
- h. *Applicant Contact:* Mr. Russell Smith, Maine Public Service Company, P.O. Box 1209, Presque Isle, ME 04769, (207) 768-5811.

- i. *FERC Contact:* Any questions on this notice should be addressed to Tom Papsidero at (202) 219-2715, or e-mail address: Thomas.Papsidero@ferc.fed.us.

- j. *Deadline for Filing Comments and/or Motions:* May 6, 1999.

All documents (original and eight copies) should be filed with: David P. Boergers, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426.

Please include the project number (2368-026) on any comments or motions filed.

- k. *Description of Transfer:* Maine Public Service Company requests to transfer the license to PDI New England, Inc. as part of its divestiture of assets mandated by the State of Maine.

- l. *Locations of the Application:* A copy of the application is available for inspection and reproduction at the Commission's Public Reference Room, located at 888 First Street, N.E., Room 2A, Washington, D.C. 20426, or by calling (202) 208-1371. (Call (202) 208-2222 for assistance). A copy is also available for inspection and reproduction at the address in item h above.

- m. Individuals desiring to be included on the Commission's mailing list should so indicate by writing to the Secretary of the Commission.

B. Comments, Protests, or Motions to Intervene—Anyone may submit comments, a protest, or a motion to intervene in accordance with the requirements of Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.210, .211, .214. In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding. Any comments, protests, or motions to intervene must be received on or before the specified comment date for the particular application.

- C1. *Filing and Service of Responsive Documents*—Any filings must bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS", "RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS", "PROTESTS", or