

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket Nos. CP99-579-000 and CP99-580-000]

Southern LNG Inc.; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Elba Island Terminal Recommissioning Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

August 9, 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 Elba Island Terminal Recommissioning Project involving construction and operation of facilities by Southern LNG Inc. (Southern LNG) on Elba Island in Chatham County, Georgia.¹ The project involves returning Southern LNG's existing, certificated liquefied natural gas (LNG) marine import terminal (Elba Island Terminal) to active service. 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.

Background

In 1972, in Docket No. CP71-264, the Federal Power Commission (FERC's predecessor) authorized Southern Energy Company (Southern LNG's predecessor), to construct and operate the Elba Island Terminal. Southern LNG initiated construction in 1973. The terminal encompasses about 140 acres on the 840-acre Elba Island in an estuary of the Savannah River. Elba Island lies approximately 8 miles upstream of the river's discharge into the Atlantic Ocean and approximately 5 miles downstream from Savannah, Georgia. The existing authorized facilities at the Elba Island Terminal include the following:

- LNG unloading facilities, including marine berth, pier, and arms for unloading LNG from vessels;
- LNG storage facilities, including three double-wall storage tanks, each with the capacity of 400,000 barrels (four billion cubic feet vaporized equivalent);
- LNG sendout facilities, including pumps and vaporizers with a maximum capacity of 540 million cubic feet per day;
- Boil-off compressors;

- Pressure relief, vent, and disposal systems;
- Spill containment facilities, including a 400,000-barrel capacity main spill containment for each LNG storage tank; and
- Fire water system sourced from a fresh-water pond and river water.

Southern LNG commenced operation in July, 1978. Between 1978 to 1980, the Elba Island Terminal was used to import LNG purchased from El Paso Algeria Corporation. El Paso Algeria Corporation transported LNG by cryogenic tankers to the point of unloading at the Elba Island Terminal. Southern LNG resold all of the vaporized LNG to Southern Natural Gas Company (Southern Natural).

In April, 1980, Southern LNG was unable to continue importation of LNG due to economic considerations. After LNG shipments were discontinued, Southern LNG retained an inventory of LNG through April, 1982. During this time, Southern LNG rendered peaking service to Southern Natural until depleting the remaining LNG.

Since 1982, the Elba Island Terminal has been maintained in a limited state of readiness to ensure that the plant could be safely and reliably reactivated. An ongoing preventative maintenance program has been in place since that time and needed repairs, replacements, enhancements and additions have been identified for implementing during the recommissioning process.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Southern LNG requests Commission authorization, in Docket No. CP99-580-000, to recommission the Elba Island Terminal for the purpose of providing open-access service to shippers desiring to contract for receipt, storage, and vaporization of LNG and delivery of vaporized LNG at the existing point of interconnect with the interstate pipeline of Southern Natural.

The storage and vaporization facilities would not be significantly altered, replaced or relocated. The storage and throughput capacity of the facilities would remain the same as originally placed in service in 1978. The recommissioning work will include the following:

- Install suction drum level control and minimum flow piping;
- Replace two LNG pumps;
- Install LNG recirculation piping;
- Install an additional boil-off compressor (1,000-horsepower);
- Install LNG tank level, density and temperature gauges;
- Upgrade fire protection system;
- Upgrade hazard detection system;
- Install intrusion detection system;

- Renew dredging of berthing area and turning basin;
- Increase dredged material basin capacity;
- Modify power distribution switchgear to allow parallel operation with utility (under consideration); and
- Install distributed control and data acquisition system.

The proposed improvements would bring the facilities into compliance with applicable current code requirements and would update the safety, security, operability and reliability of the terminal. The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.²

In addition, in Docket No. CP99-579-000, Southern LNG requests section 3 authorization under subpart B of Part 153 of the Commission's regulations for siting of natural gas import facilities. This application is directly related to Southern LNG's proposal described above in Docket No. CP99-580-000.

Land Requirements for Construction

No additional land would be required by Southern LNG's proposal. All work would occur within previously disturbed and currently maintained areas. None of the proposed recommissioning tasks would result in substantial changes to the appearance or previous function of the existing facilities. Prior to restarting the facility, the ship berthing and turning basin areas would need to be dredged and maintained to -39 feet mean low water (MLW) with an over-dredge of two feet to -41 feet MLW.

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

¹ Southern LNG's application was filed with the Commission under section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

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.

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 resource, 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, 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 below.

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, 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:

- Send **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-11.1;

- Reference Docket Nos. CP99-579-000 and CP99-580-000; and

• **Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before September 8, 1999.**

Beyond asking for written comments, in October, 1999, we will be conducting a site visit, holding a public scoping meeting, and conducting a cryogenic design and engineering review. The public meeting will be designed to provide you with more detailed information and another opportunity to offer your comments on the proposed project. Further details on the dates and locations of the above events will be noticed at a later date.

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 2). Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision.

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding ends on August 13, 1999. If this date cannot be met, 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 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. 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 website, 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.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice of Application Accepted for Filing and Soliciting Motions To Intervene and Protests

August 9, 1999.

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

a. *Type of Application:* Preliminary Permit.

b. *Project No.:* P-11753-000.

c. *Date filed:* June 11, 1999.

d. *Applicant:* Universal Electric Power Corporation.

e. *Name of Project:* Mississippi Lock and Dam No. 10 Hydro Project.

f. *Location:* At the existing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Lock and Dam No. 10 on the Mississippi River, near the Town of Guttenburg, Clayton County, Iowa.

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

h. *Applicant:* Mr. Ronald S. Feltenberger, Universal Electric Power Corp, 1145 Highbrook Street, Akron, Ohio 44301, (330) 535-7115.

i. *FERC Contact:* Ed Lee (202) 219-2809 or E-mail address at Ed.Lee@FERC.fed.us.

j. *Deadline for filing motions to intervene and protest:* 60 days from the issuance date of this notice.

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

The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person whose name appears 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