

December 1, 1995.

The Honorable John T. Conway, Chairman,  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board,  
Suite 700, 625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.,  
Washington, DC 20004.

Dear Chairman Conway: This letter acknowledges receipt of your Recommendation 95-2 regarding Safety Management. The issues identified in the Recommendation are extensive and may have significant impact on many of our existing and developing programs and initiatives. Accordingly, the Department will require additional time to evaluate fully these cross-cutting issues and their impact from both a headquarters and field perspective.

In accordance with 42 U.S.C. 2286d, the Department requests an additional 45 days to respond to Recommendation 95-2. If a 45 day extension is granted, the Department will respond to the Board by January 17, 1996.

Sincerely,

Hazel R. O'Leary

[FR Doc. 95-30084 Filed 12-8-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

### Privatization of Isotope Activities; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice for Expressions of Interest.

**SUMMARY:** Expressions of Interest are sought concerning the possible privatization of DOE isotope activities such as selling or leasing existing DOE facilities for commercial use; sale of existing isotope inventory; isotope marketing, distribution, or technical services; and other innovative arrangements for enhanced private sector involvement in isotope operations.

**DATES:** This notice is effective on the date of publication and will remain effective until February 23, 1996. Responses may be submitted at any time prior to February 23, 1996. An information meeting addressing this notice will be held at the DOE facility in Germantown, Maryland, from 9:00 a.m. until noon on January 10, 1996. Information packages distributed during the January 10, 1996, meeting will be made available to interested parties after January 11, 1996. Submit requests to the programmatic information contact listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for programmatic information should be directed to: Mr. Owen W. Lowe, U.S. Department of Energy, Isotope Production and Distribution, NE-70 (GTN), 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874, (301) 903-5161.

Expressions of Interest (original plus five copies), citing this notice, should be

postmarked by February 23, 1996, and mailed to: U.S. Department of Energy, Document Control Specialist, HR-562, Headquarters Procurement Operations, 1615 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Purpose

II. Areas of DOE Interest

III. Expressions of Interest Format

I. Purpose

The DOE Isotope Program has a twofold mission. First, the Isotope Program produces and distributes certain radioisotopes and enriched stable isotopes for research or development purposes. Prices for these isotopes are set at a level designed to balance cost recovery with the national priority of meeting U.S. research needs and supporting our health care system. Second, other radioisotopes and enriched stable isotopes are produced and distributed for medical diagnostics and therapeutics, industrial, agricultural, and other useful applications on a cost-recovery basis.

The DOE Isotope Program currently produces isotopes at six locations in the United States. The isotope products and related services from these sites are provided only where: a) there is no existing domestic, private sector capability; b) unique Government facilities are needed to provide such a capacity; or c) other productive capacity is insufficient to meet pressing national needs. While continuing to assure that a reliable supply exists, DOE is encouraging privatization of DOE Isotope Program activities in order to fulfill the DOE Isotope Program's missions at a reduced cost to isotope customers and the Nation's taxpayers by greater involvement of the private sector. This notice is not intended to be a solicitation for proposals. Instead, it is an attempt to obtain information and to identify interested private sector participants in the possible privatization of some or all DOE isotope activities. Activities that fall under the scope of this notice include, but are not limited to, selling or leasing existing DOE facilities for commercial use; sale of existing isotope inventory; isotope marketing, distribution, or technical services; and other innovative arrangements for private sector isotope operations. Depending on the nature of the responses and subsequent determinations by DOE, a formal solicitation for competitive proposals may be published in the future, and awards may be made based upon an evaluation of proposals received pursuant to the evaluation criteria as stated in the solicitation.

II. Areas of DOE Interest

DOE is seeking to encourage innovative Expressions of Interest for privatization. Expressions of Interest should be structured to address:

1. The development or deployment of isotope production, distribution, and services in terms of:

a. A significant decrease over the cost of current methods through a substantial reduction in the cost of manufacturing by use of more efficient methods or technology.

b. Feasibility of approach consistent with proposed cost. The Expression of Interest must demonstrate a knowledgeable approach and an appreciation of risks.

2. Probability of success: Clarity of objectives and quality of approach. The approach should be based on well-defined objectives, milestones, and deliverables. The approach should contain a reasonable and practical plan for providing the maximum private sector participation on a financial and managerial basis and at the least cost to the Government.

3. The appropriateness of the facilities and techniques. The need for (and availability of) facilities, equipment, design and manufacturing tools; technical, financial, and administrative resources; and the protection of intellectual property.

III. Expression of Interest Format

The length of the Expression of Interest should not be more than 15 pages (double spaced) using a 12-point type font. It is left to the responder to determine how best to use the 15 pages, however, it would facilitate review if the Expression of Interest was divided into the following sections:

Section 1—Summary

Section 2—Comments on privatization of some or all DOE isotope activities

Section 3—Additional comments and recommendations

#### Proprietary Information

If the Expression of Interest contains information that is privileged or confidential and that the respondent does not want disclosed to the public or used by the Government for any purpose other than this notice, the respondent should place the following notice on the Expression of Interest.

Notice: The data contained in pages \_\_\_\_\_ of this Expression of Interest has been submitted in confidence and contains trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is confidential or privileged, and such data should be used or disclosed only for purposes of consideration of this

response. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use or disclose data obtained without restriction from any source including the respondent.

#### Submission

Each submittal should consist of six copies, one original and five photocopies. The original copy of the Expression of Interest shall contain all documents that bear original signatures. DOE is under no obligation to pay for any costs associated with the preparation or submission of Expressions of Interest in response to this notice. DOE reserves the right to respond or not respond to any portion, all, or none of the Expressions of Interest submitted in response to this notice.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on November 21, 1995.

Terry R. Lash,

*Director, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology.*

[FR Doc. 95-30086 Filed 12-8-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP96-32-000]

#### Viking Gas Transmission Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed VGT Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

December 5, 1995.

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 proposed in the VGT Expansion Project.<sup>1</sup> 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.

#### Summary of the Proposed Project

Viking Gas Transmission Company (VGT) wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in Kittson and Norman Counties, Minnesota, to transport an additional 19,420 decatherms per day of natural gas. VGT requests authorization to construct and operate two 24-inch-

diameter pipeline loops, totalling 13.51 miles in length, and appurtenant facilities.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup>

#### Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 179.3 acres of land, including 81.9 acres of temporary right-of-way. Following construction, all of the land would be restored and allowed to revert to its former use. No new permanent right-of-way is required for the project.

#### 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

<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.

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.

#### Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by VGT.

- A total of 155 acres of agricultural land, virtually all of it is prime farmland soils, would be affected.
- One perennial stream (the North Branch, Two Rivers) would be crossed. Keep in mind that this is a preliminary list. The list of issues may be added to, subtracted from, or 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 to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426;
- Reference Docket No. CP96-32-000;
- Send a copy of your letter to: Mr. Jeff Shenot, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Room 7L-05, Washington, D.C. 20426; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before January 10, 1996.

If you wish to receive a copy of the EA, you should request one from Mr. Shenot at the above address.

#### 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".

<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.