

Standard Paragraph

E. Any person desiring to be heard or to protest said 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 18 CFR 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 this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

Lois D. Cashell,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-31230 Filed 12-6-96; 8:45 am]

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[Docket No. CP97-25-000]

Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Peak Day 2000 Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

December 3, 1996.

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 Peak Day 2000 Expansion Project.¹ 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

Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas to transport an additional 267,161 million cubic feet per day of natural gas to twenty-six of its customers. Northern seeks authority to construct and operate:

Phase I Facilities (1997)

- 18.05 miles of 30-inch-diameter mainline loops in Hardin County, Iowa and Rice County, Minnesota;

¹ Northern 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.

- 12.35 miles of 12-inch-diameter and 9.68 miles of 6-inch-diameter branch line loops in Dakota, Scott, Wright, and Carver Counties, Minnesota and Dickinson County, Iowa;

- 5.08 miles of 8-inch-diameter branch line replacement in Carver County, Minnesota;

- 0.21 mile 6-inch-diameter branch line tie-over in Jackson County, Iowa;

- two new compressor stations to provide about 11,634 horsepower (hp) of compression, and modification of six existing compressor stations to provide an additional 16,368 hp of compression in various counties in Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska; and

- three new town border stations (TBS) and modification of 31 existing TBS in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Phase II Facilities (1998)

- 4.93 miles of 30-inch-diameter mainline loop in Washington County, Minnesota; and

- one new 13,037 hp compressor station Steele County, Minnesota.

The general location of the project facilities and specific locations for facilities on new sites are shown in appendix 1.²

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 677.45 acres of land. Following construction, about 295.89 acres would be maintained as new permanent right-of-way or aboveground facility sites. The remaining 381.56 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

²The 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, D.C. 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

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, 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 several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by Northern.

- Seven federally listed endangered or threatened species could be present in the proposed project area;
- Five of the proposed loops cross residential areas; and
- A total of 6.3 acres of agricultural land, currently used for production, would be converted to industrial use.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter to the Secretary of the Commission addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. 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 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, DC 20426;

Reference Docket No. CP97-25-000;

Also, send a copy of your letter to: Ms. Amy Chang, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., PR-11.1, Washington, DC 20426; and

Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before January 9, 1997. If you wish to receive a copy of the EA, you should request one from Ms. Chang 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". 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 scoping comments considered.

If you are interested in obtaining detailed maps of a specific portion of this project, or procedural information, contact Ms. Amy Chang, EA Project Manager, at (202) 208-1199.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-31179 Filed 12-6-96; 8:45 am]

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[Project No. 11291-001 Indiana]

Star Mill, Inc.; Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment

December 3, 1996.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission) regulations, 18 CFR Part 380 (Order No. 486, 52 F.R. 47897), the Office of Hydropower Licensing has reviewed the application for an original license for the Star Milling and Electric Minor Water Power Project (project) and has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the project. The project is located on the Fawn River near the town of Howe, in northeastern Indiana.

In the DEA, the Commission's staff has analyzed the existing and potential future environmental impacts of the project and has concluded that licensing the project, with appropriate environmental protection or enhancement measures, would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

Copies of the DEA are available for review in the Public Reference Branch, Room 2A, of the Commission's offices at 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426.

Any comments should be filed within 45 days from the date of this notice and should be addressed to Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426. Please affix Project No. 11291-001 to all comments. For further information, contact Nicholas Jayjack, Environmental Coordinator, at (202) 219-2825.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-31183 Filed 12-6-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-5661-8]

Notice of Public Meeting on Drinking Water Issues

Notice is hereby given that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is holding a two-day public meeting on December 12-13, 1996, for the purpose of information exchange on technical issues related to the expedited development of rules to address microbial contaminants and disinfectants/disinfection byproducts in drinking water. Topics to be discussed

may include enhanced coagulation, pre-disinfection, disinfection processes or other technical matters related to the development of a Stage I Disinfectants/Disinfection Byproducts Rule and Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule.

EPA is inviting all interested members of the public to attend the meeting, which will be held at a location to be determined. For further information regarding the location, agenda or other aspects of the meeting, members of the public are requested to contact Crystal Rodgers of EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water at (202) 260-0676.

Dated: December 4, 1996.

Cynthia C. Dougherty,

Director, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water.

[FR Doc. 96-31348 Filed 12-6-96; 8:45 am]

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[FRL-5660-3]

Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permits for the Eastern Portion of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) of the Gulf of Mexico (GMG280000)

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of draft NPDES general permit reissuance, notice to States of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida for consistency review with approved coastal management programs.

SUMMARY: The Regional Administrator (RA) of EPA Region 4 (the "Region") is today proposing to reissue in part National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permits for the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) of the Gulf of Mexico (General Permit No. GMG280000) for discharges in the Offshore Subcategory of the Oil and Gas Extraction Point Source Category (40 CFR part 435, subpart A). The existing permit, jointly issued by Regions 4 and 6 and published at 51 FR 24897 on July 9, 1986, authorizes discharges from exploration, development, and production facilities located in and discharging to all Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico seaward of the outer boundary of the territorial seas. Region 6 issued a final permit (General Permit No. GMG290000) for the Western portion of the OCS of the Gulf of Mexico, published at 57 FR 54642 on November 19, 1992 for facilities in Federal waters seaward of Louisiana and Texas Waters. Today's proposed draft NPDES permits cover existing and new source facilities