

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: It was the intent of FHWA to re-evaluate the Final Environmental Impact Statement for that portion of the South Lawrence Trafficway project from U.S. 59 east to K-10. FHWA wanted to consider the effects of the proposed trafficway on the spiritual sites, cultural issues, and academic programs at the Haskell Indian Nations University. FHWA prepared and circulated a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and received many comments. FHWA was in the process of evaluating these comments when Douglas County and the Kansas Department of Transportation decided not to use Federal-aid Highway funds for the project. Therefore, FHWA is no longer the lead Federal agency for this project and is discontinuing the Supplemental Environmental document process.

The Record of Decision dated June 5, 1990, is now valid only for that portion of the Trafficway from the western terminus to U.S. 59.

Issued on: February 27, 1997.

David R. Geiger,

*Division Administrator, Kansas Division,
Federal Highway Administration, Topeka,
Kansas.*

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Environmental Impact Statement; Orange, Seminole, and Volusia Counties, FL

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Orange County, Seminole County, and Volusia County, Florida.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Mark D. Bartlett, Program Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 227 N. Bronough Street, Room 2015, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. Telephone: (904) 942-9598.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Project

The FHWA, in consultation with the Florida Department of Transportation, will prepare an EIS for a proposal to improve Interstate 4 (I-4) in Orange County, Seminole County, and Volusia County, Florida. The project limits are from just west of the State Road 528 (Bee Line Expressway) Interchange in Orange County to just east of the State

Road 472 Interchange in Volusia County, a distance of approximately 69 km (43 miles). The project is commonly referred to as the I-4 Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study—Section 2. The proposed improvement will involve widening the segment of I-4 to six general use lanes plus two high occupancy vehicle lanes. In addition, the project will evaluate the need for interchange modifications. Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected travel demand.

There are three independent studies which are being performed concurrently with the I-4 PD&E Study—Section 2. The I-4 PD&E Study—Section 1 involves preparation of an Environmental Assessment for improvements on I-4 from County Road 532 in Osceola County, Florida to State Road 528 in Orange County, Florida. The I-4 PD&E Study—Section 3 involves preparation of an Environmental Assessment for improvements on I-4 from State Road 472 to I-95 in Volusia County, Florida. The Central Florida Light Rail Transit System Study involves preparation of an EIS for Light Rail Transit improvements in Osceola, Orange, and Seminole Counties, Florida. Consideration of the cumulative effects of these actions, as well as other past, present and reasonable foreseeable future actions, will be included in the I-4 PD&E Study—Section 2.

Need for Project

I-4 is considered to be an integral part of Central Florida's transportation system. The Interstate carries the greatest number of people and vehicles of any transportation facility in the region and serves many of the area's primary activity centers. I-4 was originally designed to serve long distance travelers, however, the highway has evolved to one which serves many shorter trips.

Central Florida has experienced tremendous growth in the past two decades. A significant amount of this growth is occurring within close proximity to I-4. In recent years, congestion on I-4 has extended well beyond normal peak hours and major accidents have closed I-4, subsequently resulting in traffic congestion throughout the metropolitan area. Congestion and delays on I-4 and the parallel arterial highways are now considered to be the major transportation problem facing the region. Travel conditions in Central Florida are expected to continue to deteriorate due to the continuing trend of increased growth in population and tourism.

The design concepts and scope of the I-4 improvements were developed as part of the I-4 Major Investment Study (MIS). The MIS was performed in conjunction with the I-4 Multi-Modal Master Plan (I-4 MMMP) and included evaluations of a full range of reasonable alternatives and transportation modes. The specific design concept and scope recommendations identified in the MIS which are pertinent to the I-4 PD&E Study—Section 2 include:

- Six general use lanes plus two high occupancy lanes within the limits of the Section 2 Study,
- Reserved right-of-way for a rail envelope within Volusia County,
- Light rail transit from the city of Sanford to the South, extending beyond the southern limits of the Section 2 study,
- Express bus service between Volusia County and the Orlando metropolitan area.

The need for improvements to I-4 is recognized by local and regional plans. The MIS has been approved by the Orlando Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Volusia County MPO. The project is also included in the Orlando Urban Area and Volusia County year 2020 Long Range Transportation Plans. Local government comprehensive plans support mobility enhancements to I-4.

Alternative

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) "No Action" which involves no change to transportation facilities in the corridor beyond projects already committed; (2) the design concept recommended in the I-4 MIS and I-4 MMMP which consists of widening the segment of I-4 to six general use lanes plus two high occupancy vehicle lanes, and evaluating the need for interchange modifications; and (3) design concept refinements to the recommended I-4 MMMP alternative. The design concept refinements will involve consideration of geometric adjustments which maximize use of the existing infrastructure, reduce project costs, and avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

Probable Effects

FHWA and local joint lead agencies will evaluate in the EIS all significant environmental impacts including analysis of socio-economic, natural, and physical impacts for each of the alternatives. Analysis of socio-economic impacts will include the evaluation of land use and neighborhood impacts, park/recreation area impacts, historic/archaeological impacts, and visual and

aesthetic impacts. Natural impact analysis will include impacts to Outstanding Florida Waters and Wild and Scenic Rivers, aquatic preserves, wetlands, and threatened or endangered species. In addition, within the study limits, I-4 crosses the St. John's River which is a navigable waterway. Consequently, navigation impacts will be evaluated as part of the natural impact analysis. Physical impact analysis will include evaluating impacts to noise, air quality, water quality, floodplain, potentially contaminated sites, and coastal zone. The environmental evaluation will consider both short-term and long-term impacts associated with the alternatives. Measures to mitigate any significant adverse impacts will also be considered.

Environmental issues raised from responses to the Advanced Notification Letter include neighborhood protection, aesthetics, bicycle facilities, recreational greenways, alternative modes of transportation, lake protection, hydrology and stormwater management, cultural features, wildlife corridors, and rare habitat and listed species.

Scoping

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have expressed interest in this proposal. Interested parties may request project information by contacting Mr. Harold Webb, Florida Department of Transportation, District Five, 719 South Woodland Boulevard, Florida 32720 or by calling him at (904) 943-5554. A series of public meetings will be held in Orange, Seminole, and Volusia Counties between August 1997 and December 1998. In addition, public hearings will be held in Orange, Seminole, and Volusia Counties. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearings. The Draft EIS will be made available for public and agency review and comment. A formal scoping meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 15, 1997 and Wednesday, April 16, 1997 at the Eastmonte Park Recreation & Civic Center located at 830 Magnolia Drive, Altamonte Springs, Florida.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to the proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research,

Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding inter-governmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on February 27, 1997.

J.R. Skinner,

Division Administrator, Tallahassee.

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Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. P-97-2W; Notice 1]

Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities Petition for Waiver; Northern Eclipse, Inc.

Northern Eclipse, Inc. (NE) has petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR storage tank impounding system. Section 193.2155(c) requires a Class 1 impounding system whenever an LNG storage tank is located within 20,000 feet from the nearest runway serving large aircraft. The petition applies to the Northern Eclipse's proposed LNG storage facility at Fairbanks, Alaska.

The petitioner's rationale for the waiver from compliance rests on the following reasons:

1. Fairbanks does not currently have natural gas service, and given the distance to gas fields and the size of the market, petitioner believes that LNG is the only feasible way to provide natural gas service in the community.

2. Fairbanks is a small town by a lower-48 states standards, however, due to international air transport and reliance of Alaskans on air travel, Fairbanks has an international airport (FIA) with a 11,050 foot long runway. In addition, Fairbanks has a similar runway for a U.S. military base (Fort Wainwright), and other smaller runways in the area. The 20,000 foot restriction requirement eliminates any reasonable site in Fairbanks for an LNG storage tank and it would not be economically feasible to build an impounding system which would withstand a direct impact from a 747, in order to provide gas service to the Fairbanks community.

3. NE does not propose to locate its storage tank in the approach/departure corridor for heavy aircraft. The areas under consideration are approximately two miles to the side of the FIA runway.

4. NE proposes the use of a shop fabricated, heavy outer wall storage tank of less than 70,000 gallon capacity, built to National Aeronautical and Space Administration specifications, and

likely to survive even a direct impact from small aircraft.

5. Similar LNG storage tanks and dispensing facilities are routinely allowed at airports without impoundment as they are not subject to Part 193 requirements, but they pose precisely the same risk in the event of a collision, and due to their location at the airport pose a much greater risk of impact from an aircraft. To support this fact, NE provided pictures of an above ground NFPA 59A LNG storage tank at the Dallas/Fort Worth airport.

6. Part 193 contains special provisions for LNG tanks with less than a 70,000 gallon capacity. However, Section 193.2155(c) fails to reflect the vastly different risks posed by different sized LNG storage tanks. A small LNG tank like that proposed by NE poses no significant risk, and certainly no more than any other similar small energy storage tank, such as a propane tank or a non-Part 193 LNG tank.

7. During the December 9, 1996, meeting between NE and OPS on this issue, NE was informed that the origin of the distance of 20,000 feet from the airport was taken from the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Regulations under 14 CFR part 77, which define a critical area surrounding a large airport. According to NE, only § 77.13(a)(2)(i) of 14 CFR part 77, addresses 20,000 ft. restriction, which exists where there are runways of over 3,200 feet in length, and that section refers only to the heights of structures. NE believes that the FAA may be concerned with the height of the structure rather than the contents.

Because of the unusual circumstances described above at NE's proposed LNG facility, relatively low risk to the public safety due to a smaller tank, and the operators's use of a shop fabricated heavy outer wall built to more stringent standards than those specified under part 193, RSPA believes that granting a waiver from the requirements of 49 CFR 193.2155(c) would not be inconsistent with pipeline safety, nor would it lessen public safety in this case. The operator must comply with all other requirements of part 193 including Class 2 impounding system for the storage tank. Therefore, RSPA proposes to grant the waiver.

Interested parties are invited to comment on the proposed waiver by submitting in duplicate such data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments should identify the docket number and the RSPA rulemaking number. Comments should be addressed to the Docket Facility, U.S. Department Of Transportation, plaza 401, 400