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**Lois D. Cashell,**

*Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 11553-000 Alaska]

#### Lace River Hydroelectric Project; Notice of Intent To Conduct Environmental Scoping Meetings and a Site Visit

April 7, 1997.

The Energy Policy Act of 1992 allows applicants to prepare their own environmental assessment (EA) for hydropower projects and file it with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) along with their license application as part of the "applicant-prepared EA" process. Lace River Hydro (LRH) intends to prepare an EA to file with the Commission for the proposed Lace River Hydroelectric Project. LRH will hold an environmental scoping meeting, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, to identify the scope of issues that should be analyzed in the EA.

#### Scoping Meeting

The time and location of the joint public and agency scoping meeting is:

*Date:* Thursday, May 1, 1997.

*Place:* Alaska Division of Governmental Coordination, Court Plaza Building, 240 Main Street, Suite 300, Juneau, Alaska.

*Time:* 12:00 p.m. (noon).

At the scoping meetings, LRH will: (1) Summarize the tentative environmental issues and concerns on the project, (2) outline those preliminary resources that they believe would not require a detailed analysis, (3) identify reasonable alternatives to be addressed in the EA, (4) solicit from the meeting participants all available baseline information, especially quantitative data, on the resource issues, and (5) encourage statements from experts and the public on issues that should be analyzed in the EA, including views supporting or opposing AP&T's preliminary views.

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited and encouraged to attend either or both meetings to assist in identifying and clarifying the scope of environmental issues that should be analyzed in the EA.

To help focus discussions at the meetings, LRH will prepare and distribute to the participants prior to the meetings, the Initial Consultation Package and Scoping Document 1 for this project. Copies of this scoping document can be obtained by calling Mr. Earle V. Ausman of LRH at (907) 258-2420, or can be obtained directly at either meeting.

#### Site Visit

LRH will also conduct a site visit to the proposed Lace River Project on Wednesday, April 30, 1997. Those attending must meet at the Echo Bay (at the end of the road) by 10 a.m. and promptly leave for the project site, via floatplane. Because of the remoteness, snowpack that time of the year, and difficulty of ground access at the proposed project site, a flyover would provide an efficient view of the site. Those attending the site visit should be physically fit, must wear warm clothing and hip waders, and may be asked to sign a waiver of liability regarding floatplane use.

To charter enough floatplanes in advance of the visit, LRH must identify the number of individuals interested in flying over the project site. Therefore, if you intend on visiting the proposed project site, you *must* first register with Mr. Earle V. Ausman of LRH at (907) 258-2420 no later than April 24, 1997. If inclement weather prevents a site visit on April 30th, the alternate site visit will be Friday, May 2nd at the same time.

#### Meeting Procedures

The meetings will be conducted according to the procedures used at Commission scoping meetings. Because this meeting will be a NEPA scoping meeting under the APEA process, the Commission will not conduct a NEPA scoping meeting after the application and draft EA are filed with the Commission.

The scoping meeting will be recorded by a stenographer, and thus will become a part of the formal record of the proceedings for this project.

Those who choose not to speak during the scoping meeting may instead submit written comments on the project. Written comments should be mailed to: Mr. Earle V. Ausman, Lace River Hydro, 1503 West 33rd Avenue, Suite 310, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. All correspondence should show the following caption on the first page: Scoping Comments, Lace River Hydroelectric Project, Project No. 11553-000, Alaska.

For further information, please contact Mr. Earle V. Ausman at (907)

258-2420 or Mr. Carl Keller of the Commission at (202) 219-2831.

**Lois D. Cashell,**

*Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP97-223-000]

#### Southern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Montgomery-Columbus Abandonment and Replacement Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

April 7, 1997.

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 abandonment of 87.4 miles of natural gas transmission pipeline and the construction and operation of 5.5 miles of natural gas transmission pipeline, proposed in the Montgomery-Columbus Abandonment and Replacement Project.<sup>1</sup> 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.

#### Summary of the Proposed Project

Southern Natural Gas Company (Southern) wants to abandon certain of its facilities in Alabama and replace a portion of its facilities that have deteriorated. The proposed abandonment and construction will not affect Southern's service obligations. Southern seeks authority to abandon in place:

- The 12-inch-diameter Montgomery-Columbus Mainline from milepost (MP) 79.709 to MP 143.289 in Dallas, Autauga, and Elmore Counties. This would include the removal of the East Flow Regulator/Meter Station at MP 81.401, and block valves, gate valves, and taps along the mainline;
- The 12-inch-diameter Montgomery-Columbus Loop between MP 81.209 and MP 100.729 in Dallas, Autauga, and Elmore Counties. Southern would also remove a tap and gate valves; and

<sup>1</sup>Southern 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.