

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Maine Project Nos. 2364 and 2365]

Madison Paper Industries; Notice of Scoping Meetings and Site Visit and Soliciting Scoping Comments

September 24, 1999.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission) regulations provide applicants with the option of preparing their own Environmental Assessment (EA) for hydropower projects, and filing this applicant-prepared EA (APEA) with their application as part of an alternative licensing procedure.¹ On July 1, 1999, Madison Paper Industries (MPI) requested, approval to use the alternative relicensing procedure in preparation of the license applications for the Anson (FERC No. 2365) and the Abenaki (FERC No. 2364) Hydroelectric Projects. The Commission approved MPI's request on September 10, 1999. The current licenses for the projects expire on May 1, 2004.

In February 1999, MPI initiated a collaborative consultation process with state and federal agencies, local interests, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which have formed an APEA Team for the alternative licensing procedures. MPI obtained support from the participants involved in the collaborative process to pursue the APEA process for the Anson and Abenaki Projects.

Based on APEA Team meetings and comments received from February through August 1999, the MPI APEA Team has prepared Scoping Document I (SDI), which provides information on the scoping process, APEA schedule, background information, environmental issues, and proposed project alternatives. In conjunction with the APEA Team, MPI has prepared, and is distributing with SDI, a comprehensive Initial Information Package (IIP) which describes in detail the alternative process that MPI intends to use, the projects and their operations, environmental resources potentially affected by the project, and proposed studies.

Scoping Process

The purpose of the scoping process is to identify issues related to the proposed Madison Paper Industries action and to determine what issues should be addressed in the APEA. SDI is being circulated to enable appropriate

federal, state, and local resource agencies, Indian tribes, NGOs, and other interested individuals and entities to participate in the scoping process. SDI provides a brief description of the proposed action, alternatives to the proposed action, and a list of preliminary issues identified by the APEA Team.

Scoping Meeting and Site Visit

MPI will conduct two public scoping meetings on October 21, 1999.

The times and locations of the scoping meeting are:

Afternoon Scoping Meeting
October 21, 1999, 1:00 PM, Madison Paper Industries Mill, Main Street, Madison, Maine.

Evening Scoping Meeting
October 21, 1999, 6:00 PM, Madison Paper Industries Mill, Main Street, Madison, Maine.

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 APEA. For more details or a copy of SDI, please contact David Lovley, MPI, (207) 696-1225. Copies of SDII and the IIP will be available at both meetings.

A site tour, conducted by MPI, will begin at 9:00 AM, on October 21, 1999, and is expected to last about three hours. The site tour will include the Anson and Abenaki Project works, including generating facilities, the Abenaki bypassed reach, and project recreation facilities (The Pines and Madison boat launch). Site tour participants will meet at the security building at the Madison Paper Industries Mill, Main Street, Madison, Maine. Transportation will be provided. Those who wish to attend should contact David Lovley at (207) 696-1225, before October 14, 1999.

Objectives

At the scoping meetings, MPI will: (1) summarize the environmental issues tentatively identified for analysis in the EA; (2) outline any resources they believe would not require a detailed analysis; (3) identify reasonable alternatives to be addressed in the Madison Paper Industries EA; (4) solicit from the meeting participants all available information, especially quantitative data, on the resources at issue; and (5) encourage statements from experts and the public on issues that should be analyzed in the APEA.

Meeting Procedures

The meeting will be conducted consistent with the procedures used at

Commission scoping meetings. Because this meeting will be conducted pursuant to a National Environmental Policy Act scoping meeting, the Commission will not conduct another scoping meeting when the application and APEA are filed with the Commission in early 2002.

Both meetings will be recorded by a stenographer and become a part of the record of the Commission's relicensing proceedings on the Anson and Abenaki Projects. Individuals presenting statements at the meetings will be asked to identify themselves for the record. Speaking time allowed for individuals will be determined before each meeting, based on the number of persons wishing to speak and the approximate amount of time available for the session. Persons choosing not to speak but wishing to express an opinion, as well as speakers unable to summarize their positions within their allotted time, may submit written statements for inclusion in the record no later than December 21, 1999.

All comments should be submitted to: Mr. David Lovley, Madison Paper Industries, P.O. Box 129, Madison, ME 04950.

A copy of all comments should also be sent to MPI's agent: Ms. Maureen Winters, Kleinschmidt Associates, P.O. Box 576, Pittsfield, ME 04967.

Based on all written comments, a Scoping Document II (SDII) may be issued. SDII will include a revised list of issues, based on the scoping comments.

For further information regarding the APEA scoping process, please contact David Lovley of MPI at (207) 696-1225, or Nan Allen of the Commission at (202) 219-2938.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-25389 Filed 9-29-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. RP99-505-000]

Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America; Notice of Termination of Gathering Service

September 24, 1999.

Take notice that on September 20, 1999, Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America (Natural), tendered for filing in Docket No. RP99-505-000 a request pursuant to Section 4 of the Natural Gas Act, 15 U.S.C. 717C and the Commission's policy set forth in its order on rehearing in *Arkla Gathering*

¹ 81 FERC ¶ 61,103 (1997).