

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission

[Project No. 1494-172 Oklahoma]

**Grand River Dam Authority; Notice of
Availability of Draft Environmental
Assessment**

March 24, 2000.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's regulations, 18 CFR Part 380 (Order No. 486, 52 FR 47910), the Office of Energy Projects has prepared a draft environmental assessment (DEA) on the Grand River Dam Authority's application for approval of a new commercial dock facility. The Grand River Dam Authority proposes to permit Lewis Perrault, d/b/a Lewie Development Company (permittee), to construct and operate a commercial dock facility on Grand Lake's Grand Craft Cove, about 2 miles from the Pensacola Dam. The proposed facility includes nine boat slips and an area for swimming and temporary boat mooring and will be used in conjunction with the permittee's planned commercial development on his adjoining property. The Pensacola Project is on the Grand River, in Craig, Delaware, Mayes, and Ottawa Counties, Oklahoma.

In the DEA, staff concludes that approval of the proposed action would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Copies of the DEA can be obtained by calling the Commission's Public Reference Room at (202) 208-1371. Copies of the DEA can also be obtained through the Commission's homepage at <http://www.ferc.fed.us>.

Please submit any comments within 30 days from the date of this notice. Comments should be addressed to: Mr. David P. Boergers, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426. Please affix Project No. 1494-172 to all comments. For further information, please contact the project manager, Jon Cofrancesco at (202) 219-0079 or at e-mail address Jon.Cofrancesco@ferc.fed.us.

David P. Boergers,

Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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[Docket No. CP00-51-000]

**East Tennessee Natural Gas Company;
Notice of Intent To Prepare an
Environmental Assessment for the
Proposed Rocky Top Expansion
Project, and Request for Comments on
Environmental Issues**

March 27, 2000.

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, testing, operation, and abandonment of facilities proposed in the East Tennessee Natural Gas Company (East Tennessee) Rocky Top Expansion Project in various counties of Virginia and Tennessee.¹ These facilities would consist of about 15.1 miles of pipeline, about 0.7 mile of pipeline replacement at seventeen road crossings, three new meter stations and a modification to an existing meter station, mainline valves, uprating of four compressor units and four meter stations, hydrostatic testing of about 26.7 miles of pipeline to increase the maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP), and the abandonment of about 0.7 mile of pipeline. The EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

If you are a landowner on East Tennessee's proposed route and receive this notice, you may be contacted by a pipeline company representative about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities. The pipeline company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if the project is approved by the Commission, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings in accordance with state law.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" was attached to the project notice East Tennessee provided to landowners along and adjacent to the

proposed route. This fact sheet addresses a number of typically asked questions, including the use of eminent domain and how to participate in the Commission's proceedings. It is available for viewing on the FERC Internet website (www.ferc.fed.us).

This Notice of Intent (NOI) is being sent to landowners of property crossed by and adjacent to East Tennessee's proposed route; Federal, state, and local agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Indian tribes that might attach religious and cultural significance to historic properties in the area of potential effects; local libraries and newspapers; and the Commission's list of parties to the proceeding. 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.

Additionally, with this NOI we² are asking those Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA. These agencies may choose to participate once they have evaluated East Tennessee's proposal relative to their agencies' responsibilities. Agencies who would like to request cooperating status should follow the instructions for filing comments described below.

Summary of the Proposed Project

East Tennessee is proposing the Rocky Top Expansion Project to satisfy the growing demand for natural gas in the western Virginia and eastern Tennessee regions. The project would provide new firm service to meet increased market demand of specific customers as well as provide system-wide benefits. East Tennessee is requesting authorization to increase its pipeline capacity by a total of 35,068 dekatherms (Dth) per day through the installation of additional pipeline, hydrostatic testing to increase MAOP, pipeline replacement, compressor horsepower and meter station uprates, and installation of additional metering facilities.

East Tennessee proposes to construct the following new facilities on its 3300 and 3100 Lines.

- About 15.1 miles of 12-inch-diameter pipeline loop³ in Wythe,

² "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environment staff of the Office of Energy Projects, part of the Commission staff.

³ A loop is a segment of pipeline that is installed adjacent to an existing pipeline and connected to it on both ends. The loop allows more gas to be moved through the pipeline system.

¹ East Tennessee's application was filed with the Commission on December 13, 1999, under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.