

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. CP08-14-000]

El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Hobbs Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

December 11, 2007.

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 Hobbs Expansion Project involving construction and operation of natural gas pipeline facilities by El Paso Natural Gas Pipeline Company (El Paso) in Lea County, New Mexico and Winkler County, Texas. 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.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help determine which issues need to be evaluated in the EA. Please note that the scoping period will close on January 11, 2008. Details on how to submit comments are provided in the Public Participation section of this notice.

This notice is being sent to affected landowners; federal, state, and local government agencies; elected officials; Native American tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. State and local government representatives are asked to notify their constituents of this proposed project and to encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" 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 Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>).

Summary of the Proposed Project

El Paso proposes three components (compression, new pipeline, and piping modifications) to meet the natural gas delivery requirements at the SPS Hobbs Power Plant in Lea County, New Mexico. El Paso proposes to construct, own, and operate:

- A natural gas-fired, reciprocating jumper compressor unit totalling 3,550 horsepower (HP), with appurtenances, at it Eunice "C" Compressor Station;
- 7.3 miles of 20-inch-diameter pipeline and the new Hobbs Delivery Meter Station;
- Pipeline system improvements to include the Maximum Allowable Operation Pressure (MAOP) up-rate of 5.7 miles of the existing 16-inch-diameter Line No. 30131; and
- Plant yard pipe modifications at El Paso's existing Keystone and Eunice "B" Compressor Stations.

All work would occur in Lea County, New Mexico except for the work at the Keystone Compressor Station in Winkler County, Texas. El Paso also proposes to abandon in place 1,700 feet of existing Line No. 30131 pipeline in Lea County, New Mexico.

The general location of the proposed facilities is shown in Appendix 1.¹

The EA Process

We² are preparing this EA to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impact that could result if it authorizes El Paso's proposal. By this notice, we are also asking federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA.

With this notice, we are asking federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA. These agencies may choose to participate once they have evaluated the proposal relative to their responsibilities. Additional agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice.

NEPA also requires the FERC to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as "scoping." The

¹ The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the **Federal Register**. Copies of all appendices are available on the Commission's website at the "eLibrary" link or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary refer to the "Additional Information" section of this notice. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail. Requests for detailed maps of the proposed facilities should be made directly to El Paso.

² "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the FERC's Office of Energy Projects.

main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, we are requesting public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA.

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.
- Land use.
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands.
- Cultural resources.
- Vegetation and wildlife.
- Air quality and noise.
- Endangered and threatened species.

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, where necessary, 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 make our recommendations to the Commission.

To ensure your comments are considered, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section below.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. By becoming a commentor, your concerns will be addressed in the EA and considered by the Commission. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal including alternative compressor station sites, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please carefully follow these instructions to ensure that your comments are received in time and properly recorded:

- Send an original and two copies of your letter to: Kimberley D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission, 888 First St., NE., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426;

- Label one copy of the comments for the attention of Gas Branch 2, PJ-11.2;
- Reference Docket No. CP08-14-000; and

- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before January 11, 2008.

The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments. See 18 Code of Federal Regulations 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Internet Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> under the "eFiling" link and the link to the User's Guide. Prepare your submission in the same manner as you would if filing on paper and save it to a file on your hard drive. Before you can file comments you will need to create an account by clicking on "Login to File" and then "New User Account." You will be asked to select the type of filing you are making. This filing is considered a "Comment on Filing."

We will mail the EA for public comment. If you are interested in receiving it, please return the Information Request (Appendix 2). If you do not return the Information Request, you will be taken off the mailing list.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding, or "intervenor". 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). Intervenor has the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision. Motions to Intervene should be electronically submitted using the Commission's eFiling system at <http://www.ferc.gov>. Persons without Internet access should send an original and 14 copies of their motion to the Secretary of the Commission at the address indicated previously. Persons filing Motions to Intervene on or before the comment deadline indicated above must send a copy of the motion to the Applicant. All filings, including late interventions, submitted after the comment deadline must be served on the Applicant and all other intervenors identified on the Commission's service list for this proceeding. Persons on the service list with email addresses may be served electronically; others must be served a hard copy of the filing.

Affected landowners and parties with environmental concerns may be granted intervenor status upon showing good cause by stating that they have a clear

and direct interest in this proceeding which would not be adequately represented by any other parties. You do not need intervenor status to have your environmental comments considered.

Environmental Mailing List

An effort is being made to send this notice to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the proposed project. This includes all landowners who own homes within distances defined in the Commission's regulations of certain aboveground facilities.

Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at 1-866-208-FERC or on the FERC Internet Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>) using the "eLibrary" link. Click on the eLibrary link, then on "General Search" and enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field. Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at 1-866-208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission now offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries and direct links to the documents. Go to <http://www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm>.

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at <http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx> along with other related information.

Kimberly D. Bose,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. E7-24413 Filed 12-17-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP08-8-000]

Leaf River Energy Center LLC; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Leaf River Storage Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

December 11, 2007.

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 Leaf River Storage Project involving construction and operation of underground natural gas storage and pipeline header facilities by Leaf River Energy Center LLC (Leaf River) in Smith, Jasper, and Clarke Counties, Mississippi. 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.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help determine which issues need to be evaluated in the EA. Please note that the scoping period will close on January 10, 2008. Details on how to submit comments are provided in the Public Participation section of this notice.

This notice is being sent to affected landowners; federal, state, and local government agencies; elected officials; Native American tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. State and local government representatives are asked to notify their constituents of this proposed project and to encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" 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 Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>).

Summary of the Proposed Project

Leaf River proposes to:

- Construct four storage wells and caverns with a total working gas capacity of 32 billion cubic feet (Bcf);
- Install seven 4,800 horsepower gas driven reciprocating compressor units at its proposed compressor station/gas