

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission

[Docket No. CP23–200–000]

**Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line
Company, LLC, Northern Natural Gas
Company; Notice of Scoping Period
Requesting Comments on
Environmental Issues for the Proposed
Pelto Area Abandonment Project**

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental document, that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Pelto Area Abandonment Project (Project), involving the abandonment of facilities operated by Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) and Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) (the Companies), in Louisiana state waters offshore of Terrebonne Parish and within the Pelto and Ship Shoal Blocks of federal offshore waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The Commission will use this environmental document 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 regarding the Project. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, the Commission takes into account concerns the public may have about proposals and the environmental impacts that could result from its action whenever it considers the issuance of an authorizing Order. This gathering of public input is referred to as “scoping.” The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the environmental document on the important environmental issues. Additional information about the Commission’s NEPA process is described below in the *NEPA Process and Environmental Document* section of this notice.

By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of issues to address in the environmental document. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please submit your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 14, 2023. Further details on how to submit comments are provided in the *Public Participation* section of this notice.

Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the environmental document. Commission staff will consider all written comments during the preparation of the environmental document.

If you submitted comments on this Project to the Commission before the opening of this docket on April 20, 2023, you will need to file those comments in Docket No. CP23–200–000 to ensure they are considered as part of this proceeding.

This notice is being sent to the Commission’s current environmental mailing list for this Project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this proposed Project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Public Participation

There are three methods you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. Please carefully follow these instructions so that your comments are properly recorded. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has staff available to assist you at (866) 208–3676 or FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov.

(1) You can file your comments electronically using the eComment feature, which is located on the Commission’s website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to FERC Online. Using eComment is an easy method for submitting brief, text-only comments on a project;

(2) You can file your comments electronically by using the eFiling feature, which is located on the Commission’s website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to FERC Online. With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on “eRegister.” You will be asked to select the type of filing you are making; a comment on a particular project is considered a “Comment on a Filing”; or

(3) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the Commission. Be sure to reference the project docket number (CP23–200–000) on your letter. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Additionally, the Commission offers a free service called eSubscription which makes it easy to stay informed of all issuances and submittals regarding the dockets/projects to which you subscribe. These instant email notifications are the fastest way to receive notification and provide a link to the document files which can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings. Go to <https://www.ferc.gov/ferc-online/overview> to register for eSubscription.

The Commission’s Office of Public Participation (OPP) supports meaningful public engagement and participation in Commission proceedings. OPP can help members of the public, including landowners, environmental justice communities, Tribal members and others, access publicly available information and navigate Commission processes. For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, the public is encouraged to contact OPP at (202) 502–6595 or OPP@ferc.gov.

Summary of the Proposed Project

The Companies seek to abandon six pipeline segments with different ownership interests that total about 32.1 miles. These segments are listed below.

Pipeline Facilities Owned by Transco

- Pipeline Segment Numbers (PSN) 1536 and PSN1534, 8-inch-diameter pipelines located from Valve LE 2739 to the PL–11 Platform. PSN 1536 and PSN 1534 total approximately 18.2 miles in length. Approximately 12.6 miles of these segments are within federal waters and 5.6 miles are within state waters.

- PSN 4778, a 12-inch-diameter pipeline totaling 0.9-mile in length and located from Valve LE 1593 and Valve LE 1597 to Valve LE 195, entirely within federal waters.

- PSN 5136, a 16-inch-diameter pipeline totaling 0.9 mile in length and located from the PL–10 Platform to Valve LE 1694, entirely within federal waters.

Pipeline Facilities Owned by Transco and Northern¹

- PSN 5135, a 12-inch-diameter pipeline totaling 1.3 miles in length and located from the Ship Shoal 70 Platform (SS–70 Platform) to Valve LE 1596,

¹ A third company, Kinetica Midstream Energy, LLC (Kinetica), owns the remaining 6.98 percent of both PSN 5135 and PSN 5137. Kinetica has previously abandoned services to these assets and, as such, is not a party listed as an applicant to this application.

entirely within federal waters. Transco owns 82.94 percent, and Northern owns 10.08 percent of this segment.

- PSN 5137, a 20-inch-diameter pipeline totaling 10.8 miles in length and located from the SS-70 Platform to Valve LE 1694, entirely within federal waters. Transco owns 82.94 percent and Northern owns 10.08 percent of this segment.

Additionally, Transco proposes to abandon risers in place from the PL-10 and PL-11 Platforms, abandon risers by removal from the SS-70 Platform, and remove metering and associated equipment from the PL-10, PL-11, and SS-91 Platforms in federal waters.

Project pipelines in federal waters are within a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) identified Significant Sediment Resource Area and are required by BOEM to be removed upon abandonment. Similarly, the Louisiana Office of State Lands requires removal of abandoned pipelines within state waters. Therefore, all Project pipelines would be abandoned by removal, with the exception of 40- to 80-foot-long sections located at 27 active foreign pipeline crossings (resulting in approximately 0.2 to 0.4 mile of pipeline abandoned in place).

The general location of the Project facilities is shown in appendix 1.²

Land Requirements for Abandonment

A total of about 1,156.1 acres would be temporarily impacted by the Project. Following the completion of Project activities, all temporary workspaces within federal and state waters would be restored to approximate pre-construction contours through normal tidal and wave action.

NEPA Process and the Environmental Document

Any environmental document issued by the Commission will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the abandonment activities, under the relevant general resource areas:

- geology and sediments;
- water resources and wetlands;
- vegetation and wildlife;
- threatened and endangered species;
- cultural resources;
- land use;
- environmental justice;

- air quality and noise; and
- reliability and safety.

Commission staff will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project or portions of the Project and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas. Your comments will help Commission staff identify and focus on the issues that might have an effect on the human environment and potentially eliminate others from further study and discussion in the environmental document.

Following this scoping period, Commission staff will determine whether to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EA or the EIS will present Commission staff's independent analysis of the issues. If Commission staff prepares an EA, a *Notice of Schedule for the Preparation of an Environmental Assessment* will be issued. The EA may be issued for an allotted public comment period. The Commission would consider timely comments on the EA before making its decision regarding the proposed project. If Commission staff prepares an EIS, a *Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS/Notice of Schedule* will be issued, which will open up an additional comment period. Staff will then prepare a draft EIS which will be issued for public comment. Commission staff will consider all timely comments received during the comment period on the draft EIS and revise the document, as necessary, before issuing a final EIS. Any EA or draft and final EIS will be available in electronic format in the public record through eLibrary³ and the Commission's natural gas environmental documents web page (<https://www.ferc.gov/industries-data/natural-gas/environmental-environmental-documents>). If eSubscribed, you will receive instant email notification when the environmental document is issued.

With this notice, the Commission is asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues of this project to formally cooperate in the preparation of the environmental document.⁴ 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.

³ For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

⁴ The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, section 1501.8.

Consultation Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Commission is using this notice to initiate consultation with the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.⁵ The environmental document for this project will document findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

Environmental Mailing List

The environmental mailing list federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; and other interested parties. Commission staff will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that Commission notices related to this environmental review are sent to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the proposed project.

If you need to make changes to your name/address, or if you would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please complete one of the following steps:

(1) Send an email to GasProjectAddressChange@ferc.gov stating your request. You must include the docket number CP23-200-000 in your request. If you are requesting a change to your address, please be sure to include your name and the correct address. If you are requesting to delete your address from the mailing list, please include your name and address as it appeared on this notice. This email address is unable to accept comments.

OR

(2) Return the attached "Mailing List Update Form" (appendix 2).

Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at (866) 208-FERC, or on the FERC website at www.ferc.gov using the

⁵ The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations are at title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

² The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the **Federal Register**. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at www.ferc.gov using the link called "eLibrary". For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice. At this time, the Commission has suspended access to the Commission's Public Reference Room. For assistance, contact FERC at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or call toll free, (886) 208-3676 or TTY (202) 502-8659.

eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on “General Search” and enter the docket number 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 (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of all formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

Public sessions or site visits will be posted on the Commission’s calendar located at <https://www.ferc.gov/news-events/events> along with other related information.

Dated: June 14, 2023.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

Appendix 1

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

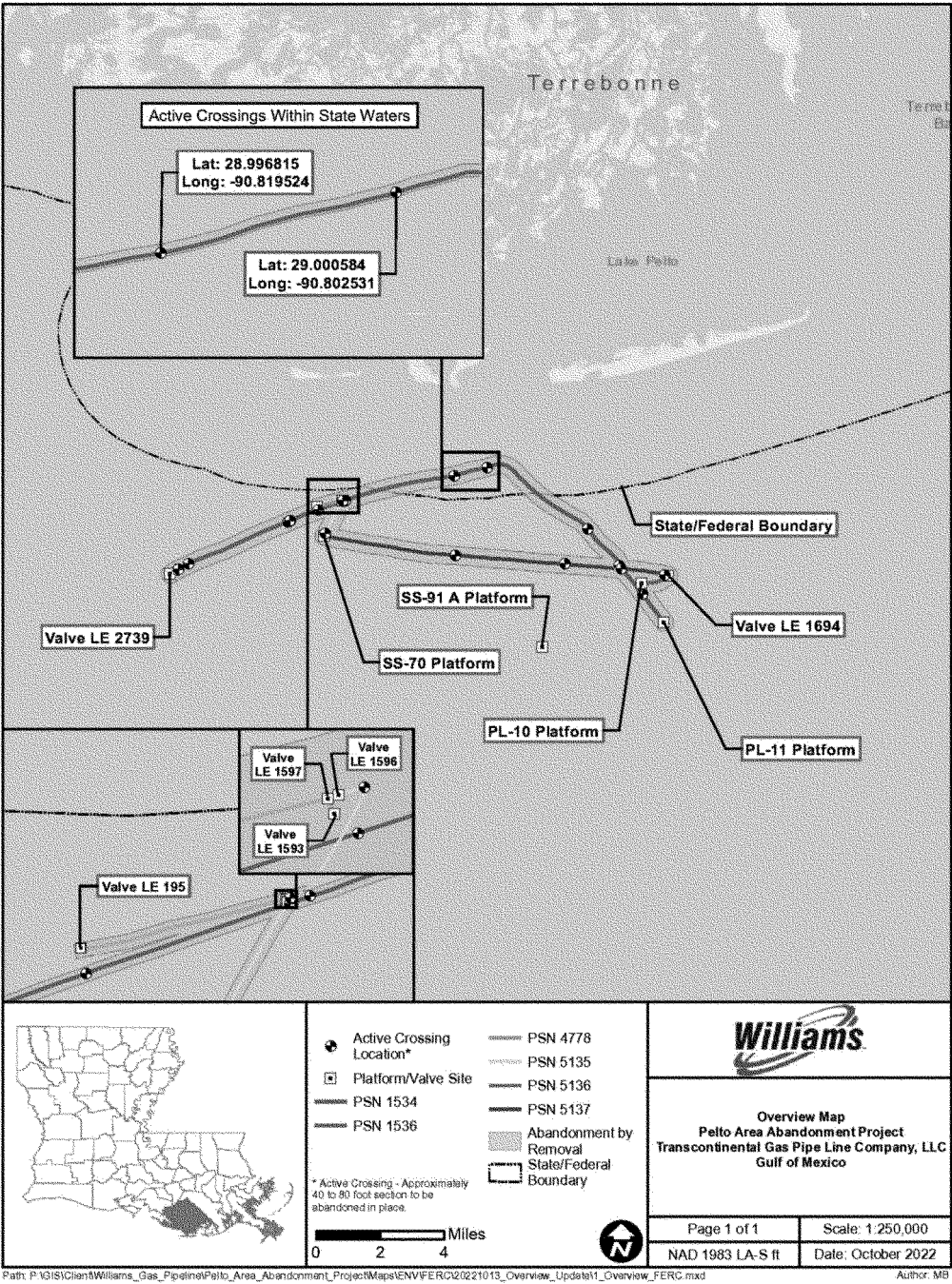


Figure 1.1-1. Overview of the Pelto Area Abandonment Project.

Appendix 2

MAILING LIST UPDATE FORM**Pelto Area Abandonment Project**

Name _____

Agency _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

☐ Please update the mailing list☐ Please remove my name from the mailing list

FROM _____

ATTN:**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20426
OEP/DG2E/Gas 3 - PJ - 11.3**

(Pelto Area Abandonment Project – Docket No. CP23-200)

Staple or Tape Here