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**Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP02-142-000]

#### **Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Rock Springs Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues**

May 28, 2002.

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 Rock Springs Expansion Project involving the abandonment, construction and operation of facilities by Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation (Columbia) in Chester County, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> The facilities being abandoned consist of 8.6 miles of 14-inch-diameter pipeline which would be replaced with 8.6 miles of 24-inch-diameter 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 receiving 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 Columbia provided to landowners. 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](http://www.ferc.fed.us)).

#### **Summary of the Proposed Project**

Columbia is proposing the Rock Springs Energy Expansion Project to expand its existing system in Pennsylvania to provide firm transportation service to Rock Springs Generation, L.L.C.'s and CED Rock Springs, Inc.'s power plant to be built in Cecil County, Maryland. This project would allow Columbia to deliver 270,000 Dekatherms per day of gas to the power plant.

Columbia proposes to abandon its existing 8.6 mile 14-inch-diameter Line 1278 in Chester County, Pennsylvania and replace it with 24-inch-diameter pipeline beginning at Columbia's Downingtown Compressor Station and extending to its Eagle Compressor Station. The Rock Springs Generation, L.L.C. and CED Rock Springs, Inc. would construct 800 feet of nonjurisdictional 16-inch-diameter pipeline from the existing Rock Springs Meter Station in Cecil County, Maryland to the power plant. See appendix 2 for a location map of Columbia's Line 1278.

#### **Land Requirements for Construction**

Construction of Columbia's proposed facilities would require about 97 acres of land, including construction right-of-way for the pipeline and extra work areas needed for access and staging areas. Columbia would generally use a 50-to 75-foot-wide construction right-of-way during replacement. Line 1278 parallels for 6.5 miles Columbia's existing Line 1896 which will be replaced the summer of 2002 under the order issued in Docket No. CP01-439-000. The majority of the construction right-of-way for Line 1278 would overlap the construction right-of-way used for Line 1896. About 53 acres would be maintained as permanent right-of-way.

Construction access to Columbia's project generally would be via the construction right-of-way, private drives, and existing road network. Columbia has identified 10 existing

access roads necessary for the construction of its project. No new access roads would be constructed.

#### **The EA Process**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us<sup>2</sup> to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping." The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. 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.

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
- water resources and wetlands
- vegetation and wildlife
- threatened and endangered species
- cultural resources
- land use
- reliability and safety
- air quality and noise

We will evaluate possible 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.

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.

<sup>1</sup> Columbia's application was filed with the Commission on April 5, 2002, under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

<sup>2</sup> "We", "us", and "our", refer to the environmental staff of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP).

*Currently Identified Environmental Issues*

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by Columbia. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

**Water Resources and Wetlands**

- Crossing 8 perennial waterbodies
- Crossing 20 wetlands

**Vegetation**

- About 5.5 acres of forest to be cleared

**Federally-Listed Threatened and Endangered Species**

- Potential impact on the bog turtle

**Land Use**

- Impact on 97 residences and 13 buildings located within 50 feet of the construction work area

*Public Participation and Site Visit*

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 locations or routes), 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: Magalie R. Salas, 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 1, PJ-11.1;
- Reference Docket No. CP02-142-000; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before June 28, 2002.

Comments, protests, and interventions may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> under the "e-Filing" link and link to the User's Guide. Before you can file comments you will need to create an account which can be created by clicking on "Login to File" and then "New User Account".

If you do not want to send comments at this time but still want to remain on our mailing list, please return the Information Request (appendix 2)<sup>3</sup>. If you do not return the Information Request, you will be removed from the environmental 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 known as an "intervenor." Intervenor play a more formal role in the process. Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide 14 copies of its filings to the Secretary of the Commission and must send a copy of its filings to all other parties on the Commission's service list for this proceeding. If you want 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) (see appendix 1). Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision.

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.

Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection. This filing may also be viewed on the web at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "RIMS" link, select "Docket #" and follow the instructions (call 202-208-2222 for assistance).

Similarly, the "CIPS" link on the FERC Internet website provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

From the FERC Internet website, click on the "CIPS" link, select "Docket #" from the CIPS menu, and follow the instructions. For assistance with access

<sup>3</sup> The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the **Federal Register**. Copies are available on the Commission's website at the "RIMS" link or from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, NE, Room 2A, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. For instructions on connecting to RIMS refer to the last page of this notice. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

to CIPS, the CIPS helpline can be reached at (202) 208-2474.

**Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,**

*Deputy Secretary.*

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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

[OPPTS-2002-0016; FRL-7179-1]

**National Advisory Committee for Acute Exposure Guideline Levels for Hazardous Substances; Notice of Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** A meeting of the National Advisory Committee for Acute Exposure Guideline Levels for Hazardous Substances (NAC/AEGL Committee) will be held on June 17-19, 2002, at Rutgers University Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute in Piscataway, NJ. At this meeting, the NAC/AEGL Committee will address, as time permits, the various aspects of the acute toxicity and the development of Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs) for the following chemicals: (a) Proposed AEGL Chemicals: allyl alcohol; benzene; methyl mercaptan; tetrachloroethylene; and toluene; (b) comments from the National Academy of Sciences Subcommittee for AEGLs: allyl amine; cis and trans crotonaldehyde; cyclohexyl amine; diborane; ethylene diamine; hydrogen chloride; hydrogen fluoride; hydrogen sulfide; iron pentacarbonyl; nickel carbonyl; perchloromethyl mercaptan; and phosgene; and (c) comments from the **Federal Register** of February 15, 2002 (67 FR 7164) (FRL-6815-8), and decision to raise to Interim AEGL status: Carbon tetrachloride; chlorine; chlorine dioxide; and propylene oxide.

**DATES:** A meeting of the NAC/AEGL Committee will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 17, 2002; from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 18, 2002, and from 8:30 a.m. to noon on June 19, 2002.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Rutgers University Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute Conference Room C 170 Frelinghuysen Rd, in Piscataway, New Brunswick, NJ 08854. Guest Parking is available in parking Lot 54 and directions to the Institute are available on the Internet at <http://www.eohsi.rutgers.edu/indexinfo.shtml>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information contact: Barbara