

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 27, 1997.

Louis C. Cusimano,

Assistant Executive Director for General Aviation Operations, Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee.

[FR Doc. 97-28944 Filed 10-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Smith County, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed new location highway project in Smith County, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Mack, P.E., Acting District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Room 826, Federal Office Building, 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Randy Hopman, P.E., Director of Transportation Planning and Development, Texas Department of Transportation, PO Box 2031, Tyler, Texas 75710.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct the western section of Loop 49, an approximately 40 mile circumferential controlled access highway around the urbanized area of Tyler in Smith County, Texas. The western section of the proposed Loop 49 extends from State Highway 155 northward to Interstate Highway 20 in western Smith County. The length of the project varies, depending on the selected alternative, averaging approximately 28.3 kilometers (17 miles). The proposed action is intended to provide access and increased mobility to the western Tyler/Smith County area and the Northeast Texas region; and to provide a safer, more convenient route for traffic traveling through the Tyler area.

Alternatives to the proposed action to be discussed in the EIS consist of (1) taking no action; and (2) improving existing roadways in the urbanized areas of Smith County. The build alternatives include five alternative alignments along new location rights-of-

way connecting State Highway 155 to Interstate Highway 20.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of Loop 49 will vary according to the alternative alignments utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: Transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, and mobility improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the roadway, water impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right-of-way encroachment, wildlife habitat impacts, and impacts to residents and businesses including potential relocations.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments have been sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed interest in the proposal. A Major Investment Study has been completed in compliance with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. In addition, several meetings have been held by the Loop 49 Steering Committee, composed of representatives of local governments, agencies, and interested organizations and citizens. A public meeting was held on August 28, 1997, at the Harvey Convention Center in Tyler, Texas, at which public comments on the proposed action and alternatives were requested. In addition, a public hearing will be held after publication of the Draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or TxDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12373 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: October 21, 1997.

John Mack,

Acting District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

[FR Doc. 97-28865 Filed 10-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Travis and Williamson Counties, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Travis and Williamson Counties, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, 826 Federal Office Building, 300 E. 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, and Ms. Dianna Noble, P.E., Director, Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th St., Austin, Texas 78701.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), is considering an upgrade to the existing road network in Travis and Williamson Counties. Under this proposed action State Highway 45 (SH 45) would be constructed within a corridor beginning FM 685 north of Pflugerville, Texas, and running west to a terminus with U.S. Highway 183, a distance of approximately 14 miles. Improvements to be considered in this project include constructing a roadway on new or existing locations, and/or improving alternative transportation modes in the community. The proposed SH 45 would extend west from FM 685 along a new location right-of-way to Louis Henna Boulevard. The proposed roadway would follow Louis Henna Boulevard to its interchange with IH 35, briefly follow FM 1325 west from its intersection with IH 35, and then utilize new right-of-way location to connect with RM 620 west of Round Rock, Texas. The SH 45 roadway would follow RM 620 to its western terminus at U.S. Highway 183. Ultimate facility design is anticipated to be a six-lane roadway with frontage roads and overpasses at major thoroughfares and direct connection ramps at IH 35, Loop 1 and SH 130.

An EIS will be prepared for this project pursuant to 23 CFR part 771 and 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508. The corridor being considered for SH 45 closely parallels a needed transportation corridor identified by the Austin Transportation Study. Two preliminary Draft EIS's were prepared in 1990 as part of the SH 45 planning process.

These previous studies identified the need for a new location, multiple lane roadway with full control of access; however, these DEIS's were never finalized. Much of the relevant information developed for these studies will be utilized during the project development process for proposed SH 45.

Major considerations in the EIS will include an analysis of the costs of right-of-way, the numbers and types of relocations necessary, engineering constraints and limitations due to topography, and potential environmental impacts involving land use, socioeconomic conditions, water resources, air quality, noise, traffic, ecological/cultural resources, and hazardous materials sites. Multiple alignment alternatives will be studied for the new location sections. At the present stage of the EIS process, no preferred alternative has been selected.

A public meeting was held on September 23, 1997, at the Cedar Valley Middle School in Round Rock, Texas. In addition, a public hearing will be held after the Draft EIS has been completed and made available to the agencies and public. Other public involvement opportunities include a newsletter to be sent periodically to update the public on the EIS progress and the dates, times, and locations of public meetings and hearings; and news releases to be prepared at appropriate times during the EIS process to inform the public about the EIS status and relevant dates, time, and locations of public meetings and hearings. In addition, at appropriate times over the course of the EIS process, presentations will be made to the Round Rock City Council, Williamson County Commissioner's Court, numerous resource protection agency personnel, and the Austin Transportation Study, which serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or TxDOT at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: October 21, 1997.

John Mack,

Acting District Engineer Austin, Texas.

[FR Doc. 97-28867 Filed 10-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA-97-2707; Notice 2]

Pipeline Safety; Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities, Grant of Waiver; Applied LNG Technologies

Applied LNG Technologies (ALT) petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with certain provisions of 49 CFR Part 193 for its Needle Mountain Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) storage and truck loading facility at Topock, Arizona. This facility consists of two, 50,000 gallon LNG storage tanks and a truck transfer system. The LNG is piped a short distance to a liquefaction facility owned and operated by a subsidiary of El Paso Natural Gas. A transmission pipeline, owned by El Paso Natural Gas Company, supplies Part 192 regulated gas to the El Paso Field Services, a liquefaction facility. Petitioner alleges that the Needle Mountain LNG storage and loading facility (NMF) is non-jurisdictional in accordance with Sections 193.2001(a) and (b)(1) because the facility would not be transporting natural gas by pipeline, but rather would be loading LNG into tank trucks for delivery to commercial and industrial customers. ALT claims that it's NMF is the ultimate consumer of LNG.

On May 16, 1997, the RSPA issued a Interpretation of Part 193 as it applies to the NMF facility. In that interpretation, RSPA stated that regardless of who owns or operates different sections of an LNG facility, it is subject to Part 193 in its entirety. Part 193 encompasses all parts of an LNG facility from the point at which it receives gas from a Part 192 regulated gas transmission pipeline through the liquefaction process, storage, and transfer into a motor carrier vehicle.

Petitioner then requested a waiver from compliance with certain sections of Part 193 and proposed to ensure equivalent safety through compliance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 59A. The specific sections of Part 193 for which Petitioner sought a waiver are:

(1) § 193.2173—*Water Removal*: § 193.2173(a) requires that except for

Class 1 systems, impounding systems must have sump pumps and piping over the dike to remove water collecting in the sump basin.

NFPA 59A section 2-2.2.7 requires either sump pumps or gravity drainage for water removal, provided there is means to prevent the escape of LNG by way of the drainage system.

Petitioner's rationale for noncompliance: The impoundment area in this facility drains to a sump basin. A sump dump is not provided due to the arid location. In the rare event of rain in Topock, AZ, Petitioner does not expect to have standing water for any length of time.

RSPA proposed granting waiver from § 193.2173 only if petitioner could demonstrate that there would be no standing water (i.e., proving ground is permeable) in the sump for any significant period.

(2) § 193.2209(b)(2)—*Instrumentation for LNG storage tanks*: For LNG tanks with capacity of 70,000 gallons or less, § 193.2209(b)(2) requires pressure gages and recorders with high pressure alarm.

NEPA 59A 7-2.1 requires only a pressure gage.

Petitioner does not believe that safety has been compromised by requiring only a pressure gage, because any high pressure in the storage tank is controlled by a recompressor system within the "facility" that maintains the storage pressure at 20 psig. Any failure of this system places the entire storage facility in a "fail safe" (shut down) mode.

RSPA proposed not granting a waiver from § 193.2209(b)(2) because, in our view recorders (at the storage tank site and possibly at the control center) and a high pressure alarm (at the control center) are essential in the event of the failure of the recompressor system. Although the entire storage facility will be placed in a shut down mode, there appears to be no way to prevent pressure from increasing in the LNG storage tank. This is especially important because this LNG storage facility will be an unattended operation.

(3) § 193.2321(a)—*Nondestructive tests, Circumferential butt welds*: § 193.2321(a) requires that 100 percent of circumferential butt welded pipe joints in the cryogenic piping and 30 percent of circumferential butt welded pipe joints in the non-cryogenic piping be nondestructively tested.

NEPA 59A 6-6.3.2 requires all circumferential butt welds to be nondestructively tested, except that liquid drain and vapor vent piping with an operating pressure that produces a hoop stress of less than 30 percent of specified minimum yield stress (SMYS) need not be nondestructively tested,