

Comment Date: 5 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, March 1, 2006.

Any person desiring to intervene or to protest in any of the above proceedings must file in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and § 385.214) on or before 5 p.m. Eastern time on the specified comment date. It is not necessary to separately intervene again in a subdocket related to a compliance filing if you have previously intervened in the same docket. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Anyone filing a motion to intervene or protest must serve a copy of that document on the Applicant. In reference to filings initiating a new proceeding, interventions or protests submitted on or before the comment deadline need not be served on persons other than the Applicant.

The Commission encourages electronic submission of protests and interventions in lieu of paper, using the FERC Online links at <http://www.ferc.gov>. To facilitate electronic service, persons with Internet access who will eFile a document and/or be listed as a contact for an intervenor must create and validate an eRegistration account using the eRegistration link. Select the eFiling link to log on and submit the intervention or protests.

Persons unable to file electronically should submit an original and 14 copies of the intervention or protest to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Washington DC 20426.

The filings in the above proceedings are accessible in the Commission's eLibrary system by clicking on the appropriate link in the above list. They are also available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. There is an eSubscription link on the Web site that enables subscribers to receive e-mail notification when a document is added to a subscribed docket(s). For assistance with any FERC Online service, please e-mail FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or call (866) 208-3676 (toll free). For TTY, call (202) 502-8659.

Magalie R. Salas,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. E6-2862 Filed 2-28-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. PF06-7-000]

Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Northern Lights Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues and Notice of Scoping Meetings

February 23, 2006.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of Northern Natural Gas Company's (Northern) planned Northern Lights Expansion Project located in Iowa and Minnesota. This notice announces the opening of the scoping process we will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine which issues need to be evaluated in the EA. Please note that the scoping period will close on March 24, 2006.

Comments may be submitted in written form or presented verbally at the public meetings detailed below. Further details on how to submit written comments are provided in the public participation section of this notice. In lieu of sending written comments, you are invited to attend the public scoping meetings that are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, March 14, 2006, 7 p.m.—
Riverwood Inn and Conference Center, Sunset Room, 10990 95th Street NE., Monticello, MN 55362, 763-441-6833.

Wednesday, March 15, 2006, 7 p.m.—
Farmington Middle School East, Multi-Purpose Room, 4100 208 Street West, Farmington, MN 55024, 651-460-1600.

Thursday, March 16, 2006, 7 p.m.—Best Western Holiday Lodge, 2023 7th Avenue North, Clear Lake, IA 50428, 641-357-5253.

This notice is being sent to affected landowners; Federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; environmental and public interest groups; Native American tribes; other interested parties in this proceeding; and local libraries and newspapers. We encourage government representatives to notify their constituents of this planned project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Northern proposes to expand its natural gas transmission system to provide incremental firm service of 350,000–400,000 dekatherms in Northern's market area. More specifically, Northern seeks authority to construct the following facilities in various counties in Iowa and Minnesota:

- Construct approximately 18.8 miles of 36-inch-diameter pipeline extension in Hancock, Worth, and Winnebago counties, Iowa (Ventura/Owatonna E-Line);

- Abandon and remove approximately 15.0 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline in Hancock, Worth, and Winnebago counties, Iowa (J-Line);

- Construct approximately 10.0 miles of 30-inch-diameter pipeline extension in Rice and Steele counties, Minnesota (Owatonna/Faribault D-Line);

- Construct approximately 29.2 miles of 24-inch-diameter pipeline extension in Dakota and Rice counties, Minnesota (Faribault/Farmington E-Line);

- Construct approximately 4.3 miles of 4-inch-diameter pipeline loop in Anoka County, Minnesota (Elk River/Ham Lake Line);

- Construct approximately 7.6 miles of 24-inch-diameter pipeline loop in Dakota County, Minnesota (Rosemount Loop);

- Construct approximately 1.8 miles of 6-inch-diameter pipeline loop in Sherburne County, Minnesota (St. Cloud/Becker Line);

- Replace approximately 3.3 miles of 3-inch-diameter pipeline loop with 10-inch-diameter pipeline in Sherburne and Wright counties, Minnesota (Elk River/St. Michael Line);

- Modifications at two existing compressor stations in Dakota and Rice counties, Minnesota;

- Construction of two town border stations (TBS) in Dakota and Waseca counties, Minnesota;

- Rebuild of an existing TBS in Hennepin County, Minnesota; and

- Modifications at 19 existing TBS in Anoka, Wright, Chisago, Washington, Dakota, Stearns, and Carver counties, Minnesota.

With the exception of five miles of new greenfield pipeline, Northern would install the pipeline looping and extensions adjacent to existing pipelines. Location maps depicting Northern's proposed facilities are provided in Appendix 1.¹

¹ The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the **Federal Register**. Copies are available on the Commission's Web site (excluding maps) at the "eLibrary" link or from the Commission's Public Reference Room or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

At this time no formal application has been filed with the FERC. For this project, the FERC staff has initiated its NEPA review prior to receiving the application. The purpose of our NEPA Pre-Filing Process is to involve interested stakeholders early in project planning and to identify and resolve issues before an application is filed with the FERC.

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities, environmental information provided by Northern, and comments gathered from concerned citizens at Northern's open houses. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- Potential impacts on the Mississippi, Vermillion, and Cannon rivers;
- Potential impacts to Vermillion River watershed;
- Potential impacts on wetlands;
- Safety concerns of the pipeline;
- Potential impacts on agricultural land and prime farmland; and
- Potential impacts on historic resources.

The EA Process

The FERC will use the EA to consider the environmental impact that could result if it issues Northern a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

This notice formally announces our preparation of the EA and the beginning of the process referred to as "scoping." We² are soliciting input from the public and interested agencies to help us focus the analysis in the EA on the potentially significant environmental issues related to the proposed action.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be included in an EA that will be prepared for the project. Our evaluation will also include reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and we will make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas of concern.

Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA may be published and mailed to affected landowners; Federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest

groups; Native American tribes; other interested parties; local libraries and newspapers; and the FERC's official service list for this proceeding. A 30-day 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.

We are currently coordinating with other jurisdictional and resource management agencies to identify their issues and concerns. These agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. By this notice, we are asking these and other 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. Agencies that would like to request cooperating status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided below.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the proposals. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before March 24, 2006 and carefully follow these instructions:

- 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 Branch 3, DG2E; and
- Reference Docket No. PF06-7-000 on the original and both copies.

Please note that 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".

When Northern submits its application for authorization to construct and operate the Northern Lights Project, the Commission will publish a Notice of Application in the **Federal Register** and will establish a deadline for interested persons to intervene in the proceeding. Because the Commission's Pre-filing Process occurs before an application to begin a proceeding is officially filed, petitions to intervene during this process are premature and will not be accepted by the Commission.

Environmental Mailing List

If you wish to remain on the environmental mailing list, please return the Mailing List Retention Form included in Appendix 2. If you do not return this form, you will be taken off our mailing list.

Availability of Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs at 1-866-208 FERC (3372) or on the FERC Internet Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>). Using the "eLibrary" link, select "General Search" from the eLibrary menu, enter the selected date range and "Docket Number" (i.e., PF06-7-000), and follow the instructions. Searches may also be done using the phrase "Northern Lights" in the "Text Search" field. For assistance with access to eLibrary, the helpline can be reached at 1-866-208-3676, TTY (202) 502-8659, or at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov. The eLibrary link on the FERC Internet Web site also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rule makings.

In addition, the FERC now offers a free service called eSubscription that 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. To register for this service, go to <http://www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm>.

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. Finally, Northern has established an Internet

² eLibrary refer to the end of this notice. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

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

Web site for its project at <http://www.northernnaturalgas.com/expansionprojects>. The Web site includes a project overview, contact information, regulatory overview, and construction procedures.

Magalie R. Salas,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. E6-2876 Filed 2-28-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice of Application Accepted for Filing and Soliciting Motions To Intervene, Protests, and Comments

February 22, 2006.

Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection:

a. *Type of Application*: Preliminary Permit.

b. *Project No.*: 12648-000.

c. *Date filed*: January 27, 2006.

d. *Applicant*: Gerard M. Lutticken.

e. *Name of Project*: Sugar Pine Creek Project.

f. *Location*: The project would be located on the Sugar Pine Creek, in El Dorado County, California. The project would be located upstream of the licensed Upper American River Project No. 2101. None of the proposed project facilities affect this licensed project. However the proposed project's transmission line may cross the project boundary of Project No. 2101. The project would use approximately 7 acres of Federal land within the El Dorado National Forest.

g. *Filed Pursuant to*: Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. 791(a)-825(r)

h. *Applicant Contact*: Mr. Gerard M. Lutticken, 730 Bluegrass Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954, Phone (707) 765-9671.

i. *FERC Contact*: Robert Bell, (202) 502-6062.

j. *Deadline for filing comments, protests, and motions to intervene*: 60 days from the issuance date of this notice.

The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person in the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they

must also serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

k. *Description of Project*: The proposed project would consist of: (1) A proposed 50-foot-long, 6-foot-high concrete masonry gravity diversion structure, (2) a proposed impoundment have a surface area of 1 acre with negligible storage and a normal water surface elevation at 4,040 feet mean sea level, (3) a proposed 2,500-foot-long, 12-inch-diameter steel penstock, (4) a proposed powerhouse containing one generating unit with an installed capacity of 750 kilowatts, (5) a proposed 3,000-foot-long, 13.8 kilovolt transmission line, and (6) appurtenant facilities. The project would have an annual generation of 1.72 gigawatt hours, which would be sold to a local utility.

l. *Locations of Applications*: A copy of the application is available for inspection and reproduction at the Commission in the Public Reference Room, located at 888 First Street NE., Room 2A, Washington DC 20426, or by calling (202) 502-8371. This filing may also be viewed on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document. For assistance, call toll-free 1-866-208-3676 or e-mail FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov. For TTY, call (202) 502-8659. A copy is also available for inspection and reproduction at the address in item h. above.

m. Individuals desiring to be included on the Commission's mailing list should so indicate by writing to the Secretary of the Commission.

n. *Competing Preliminary Permit*—Anyone desiring to file a competing application for preliminary permit for a proposed project must submit the competing application itself, or a notice of intent to file such an application, to the Commission on or before the specified comment date for the particular application (see 18 CFR 4.36). Submission of a timely notice of intent allows an interested person to file the competing preliminary permit application no later than 30 days after the specified comment date for the particular application. A competing preliminary permit application must conform with 18 CFR 4.30(b) and 4.36.

o. *Competing Development Application*—Any qualified development applicant desiring to file a competing development application must submit to the Commission, on or before a specified comment date for the particular application, either a competing development application or a

notice of intent to file such an application. Submission of a timely notice of intent to file a development application allows an interested person to file the competing application no later than 120 days after the specified comment date for the particular application. A competing license application must conform with 18 CFR 4.30(b) and 4.36.

p. *Notice of Intent*—A notice of intent must specify the exact name, business address, and telephone number of the prospective applicant, and must include an unequivocal statement of intent to submit, if such an application may be filed, either a preliminary permit application or a development application (specify which type of application). A notice of intent must be served on the applicant(s) named in this public notice.

q. *Proposed Scope of Studies Under Permit*—A preliminary permit, if issued, does not authorize construction. The term of the proposed preliminary permit would be 36 months. The work proposed under the preliminary permit would include economic analysis, preparation of preliminary engineering plans, and a study of environmental impacts. Based on the results of these studies, the Applicant would decide whether to proceed with the preparation of a development application to construct and operate the project.

r. *Comments, Protests, or Motions to Intervene*—Anyone may submit comments, a protest, or a motion to intervene in accordance with the requirements of Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.210, .211, .214. In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding. Any comments, protests, or motions to intervene must be received on or before the specified comment date for the particular application.

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 under "e-filing" link. The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing.

s. *Filing and Service of Responsive Documents*—Any filings must bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS", "COMPETING APPLICATION", "RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS", "PROTEST", OR "MOTION TO INTERVENE", as applicable, and the Project Number of