

Maintenance Branch of the Commission's offices at 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426.

Any comments should be filed within 45 days from the date of this notice and should be addressed to Lois D. Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426. Please affix "Rock Creek-Cresta Hydroelectric Project, No. 1962-000" to all comments. For further information, please contact Jim Haimes at (202) 219-2780.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-28603 Filed 11-6-96; 8:45 am]

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#### [Docket No. CP96-655-000]

#### **Destin Pipeline Company Inc.; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Destin Pipeline Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues, and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting**

November 1, 1996.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the facilities proposed in the Destin Pipeline Project.<sup>1</sup> This EIS will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether to approve the project.

We are asking a number of Federal Agencies to indicate whether they wish to cooperate with us in the preparation of the EIS. These agencies are listed in appendix 1 and may choose to participate once they have evaluated the proposal relative to their agencies' responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> To date, the U.S. Forest Service, DeSoto National Forest Chickasawhay Ranger District has requested cooperating agency status.

#### Summary of the Proposed Project

Destin Pipeline Company Inc. (Destin) wants to build new natural gas pipeline and compression facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and southeastern Mississippi to transport 1 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas to downstream

interconnections in Mississippi. Destin requests Commission authorization, in Docket No. CP96-655-000, to construct and operate the following facilities:

- 72.8 miles of 36-inch-diameter pipeline in the Gulf of Mexico extending from Main Pass Block 248 to a point of landfall near the city of Pascagoula in Jackson County, Mississippi;
- 116.8 miles of 36-inch-diameter pipeline extending northward through Jackson, George, Greene, Wayne, and Clark Counties, Mississippi to interconnections with the existing pipeline systems of Florida Gas Transmission Company (Florida Gas) and Transcontinental Pipe Line Corporation (Transco) near Shubuta, Mississippi;
- 17 miles of 30-inch-diameter pipeline within Clarke County from the interconnection with Transco to Southern Natural Gas Company's (Southern) existing Enterprise Compressor Station near Enterprise, Mississippi;
- 2.4 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline loop in Clarke County, Mississippi extending westward from Southern's Enterprise Compressor Station to an interconnection with Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (Tennessee);
- One new 14,100-horsepower (hp) compressor station near the coastline in Jackson County, Mississippi;
- One new 11,600-hp compressor station in Greene County, Mississippi;
- Five new meter stations, one each in George and Attala Counties and three in Clarke County, Mississippi; and
- Two new offshore platforms in the U.S. territorial waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 2. If you are interested in viewing detailed maps of a specific portion of the Destin Pipeline Project, please attend one of the public scoping meetings identified in this notice, or contact the EIS project manager at the phone number or address listed at the end of this notice.

#### Land Requirements for Construction

Based on information supplied by Destin, over 50 percent of the proposed onshore pipeline would parallel existing road, pipeline, or powerline rights-of-way. Following construction, about 640 acres would be maintained as new right-of-way. Another 858 acres of temporarily disturbed land would be restored and allowed to revert entirely to its former use.

Building the Destin Pipeline Project would require onshore construction rights-of-way ranging from 90 to 110 feet

wide. Following construction, a 40-foot-wide permanent right-of-way would be retained where the pipeline would be adjacent to existing utility rights-of-way and a 50-foot-wide permanent right-of-way would be retained in all other areas. Additional temporary work areas would be required on each side of road, railroad, river, and stream crossings. The two new compressor stations would each require about 2.8 acres of land. Each of the five new meter stations would require about one acre of land.

#### The EIS 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 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 EIS 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 EIS. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EIS. 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 EIS will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project. We have already identified a number of issues under each topic that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of each topic that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by the applicant. These issues are listed below. This is a preliminary list of issues and may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- **Geology and Soils**
  - Seismology and areas susceptible to landslide.
  - Prime farmland soils.
  - Erosion control and right-of-way restoration.
- **Water Resources**
  - Effect of construction on areas with shallow groundwater.
  - Effect of construction on crossings of perennial waterbodies including 3 ponds, the Chickasawhay River, and 2 crossings of the Escatawpa River.
  - Impact on wetland hydrology.
  - Consistency with Mississippi

<sup>1</sup> Destin Pipeline Company Inc.'s application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

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

- Coastal Zone Management Program.
- Biological Resources
  - Short- and long-term effects of right-of-way clearing and maintenance on wetlands, forests, and riparian areas.
  - Effects of habitat alteration
  - Effect of construction on tidal salt marshes, Bangs Lake oyster reefs, and on potential spawning areas of the gulf sturgeon in the lower Chickasawhay River.
  - Effect on freshwater and estuarine fisheries habitats and Gulf of Mexico commercial fisheries.
  - Project impact on threatened and endangered species such as the gopher tortoise and the redcockaded woodpecker.
- Cultural Resources
  - Effect on historic and prehistoric sites.
  - Native American concerns.
- Land Use
  - Impact on residences recreation areas.
  - Consistency with local land use plans and zoning.
  - Public lands including the DeSoto National Forest, Chickasawhay State Wildlife Management Area, Bangs Lake Coastal Reserve, and Gulf Islands National Seashore.
- Air Quality and Noise
  - Effect on local air quality and noise environment as a result of construction.
  - Effect on local air quality and noise environment as a result of operation of the compressor stations.
- Reliability and Safety
  - Assessment of hazards associated with natural gas pipelines.

We will also 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 Draft EIS which will be mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, affected landowners and other interested individuals, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A 45-day comment period will be allotted for review of the Draft EIS. We will consider all comments on the Draft EIS and revise the document, as necessary, before issuing a Final EIS. The Final EIS will include our response to each comment received and will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether to approve the project.

#### Public Participation and Scoping Meetings

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal (including alternative routes), and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please follow the instructions below to insure that your comments are received and properly recorded:

- Address your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20426;
- Reference Docket No. CP96-655-000;
- Send a *copy* of your letter to: Mr. Michael Boyle, EIS Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Room 72-59, Washington, DC 20426; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before December 2, 1996.

In addition to asking for written comments, we invite you to attend the public scoping meetings the FERC will conduct. The locations and times for these meetings are listed on the next page. Requests to hold additional public scoping meetings will be considered.

The public meetings are designed to provide you with more detailed information and another opportunity to offer your comments on the proposed project. Those wanting to speak at the meetings can call the EIS Project Manager to pre-register their names on the speaker list. Those people on the speaker list prior to the date of the meeting will be allowed to speak first. A second speaker list will be developed at each meeting. Priority will be given to people representing groups. A transcript of each meeting will be made so that your comments will be accurately recorded.

The public scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

Pascagoula, Mississippi; November 13, 1996, 7:00 p.m., LaFont Inn, Highway 90 East, (602) 762-7111.  
 Waynesboro, Mississippi; November 14, 1996, 7:00 p.m., Waynesboro City Auditorium, 1008 Benton Street, (601) 735-3078.

#### Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EIS scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding or become an "intervenor".

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 copies of its filings to all other parties. 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 3).

The date for filing of timely motions to intervene in this proceeding has passed. Therefore, parties now seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by section 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues have been viewed as good cause for late intervention. You do not need intervenor status to have your scoping comments considered.

#### Environmental Mailing List

This notice is being sent to individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the proposed project. It is also being sent to all potential right-of-way grantors. As details of the project become established, representatives of Destin may also separately contact landowners, communities, and public agencies concerning project matters, including acquisition of permits and rights-of-way.

All commentors will be retained on our mailing list. If you do not want to send comments at this time but still want to keep informed and receive copies of the Draft and Final EIS, please return the Information Request (appendix 4). If you do not send comments or return the Information Request, you will be taken off the mailing list.

Additional information on the proposed project is available from Mr. Michael Boyle, EIS Project Manager, at (202) 208-0839.

Lois D. Cashell,  
*Secretary.*

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-5649-1]

#### Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Conflict of Interest

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

**ACTION:** Notice

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