

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY****Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. CP98-247-000]

**Midcoast Interstate Transmission Inc.; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Colbert County Loop Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues**

April 7, 1998.

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 construction and operation of the facilities, about 7.38 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline, proposed in the Colbert County Loop Project.<sup>1</sup> This 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 addressing a number of typically asked questions, including the use of eminent domain, is attached to this notice as appendix 1.<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of the Proposed Project**

Midcoast Interstate Transmission, Inc. (Midcoast) wants to expand the capacity of its facilities in Colbert County, Alabama to transport an additional 12,350 dekatherms per day (Dth/d) of natural gas to seven local customers and to provide revised transportation service of 6,156 Dth/d to four existing customers. Midcoast seeks authority to construct and operate 7.38 miles of 16-inch-diameter pipeline and related

facilities all in Colbert County, Alabama.

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 2. If you are interested in obtaining procedural information, please write to the Secretary of the Commission.

**Land Requirements for Construction**

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 50 acres of land, all of which is currently maintained by Midcoast as permanent pipeline rights-of-way. Following construction, no new land would be converted to permanent pipeline rights-of-way. All affected land would be allowed to revert to its previous use.

**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 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, fisheries, and wetlands.
- Vegetation and wildlife.
- Endangered and threatened species.
- Public safety.
- Land use.
- Cultural resources.
- Air quality and noise.
- Hazardous waste.

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 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 on this page.

**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 Midcoast. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- Thirty residences would be located within 50 feet of the construction work area, with 6 located within 25 feet of the construction work area.
- The crossing of Little Bear Creek.

**Public Participation**

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 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 two copies of your letter to: David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426;
- Label one copy of the comments for the attention of the Environmental Review and Compliance Branch, PR-11.2.
- Reference Docket No. CP98-247-000; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before May 8, 1998.

**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's play a more formal role in

<sup>1</sup> Midcoast Interstate Transmission 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, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

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 3). Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision.

The date for filing 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 environmental comments considered. Additional information about the proposed project is available from Mr. Paul McKee of the Commission's Office of External Affairs at (202) 208-1088.

**Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,**  
*Acting Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-9602 Filed 4-10-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 11157-001]

#### Rugraw, Inc.; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment and Conduct Public Scoping Meetings and a Site Visit

April 7, 1998.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) is reviewing the hydropower application for a license of the proposed 7-megawatt Lassen Lodge Project, No. 11157-001. The project, proposed by Rugraw, Inc., would be located on the South Fork of Battle Creek, near the town of Mineral, in Tehama County, California.

The Commission staff intends to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. In the EA, we will consider reasonable alternatives to Rugraw's proposed project, and analyze both site-specific and cumulative environmental impacts

of the project, as well as economic and engineering impacts.

A draft EA will be issued and circulated to those on the mailing list for this project. All comments filed on the draft EA will be analyzed by the staff and considered in a final EA. The staff's conclusions and recommendations presented in the final EA will then be presented to the Commission to assist in making a licensing decision.

#### Scoping

We are asking agencies, Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to help us identify the scope of environmental issues that should be analyzed in the EA, and to provide us with information that may be useful in preparing the EA.

To help focus comments on the environmental issues, a scoping document outlining subject areas to be addressed in the EA will be mailed to those on the mailing list for the project. Those not on the mailing list may request a copy of the scoping document from the Project Coordinator, whose telephone number is listed below.

Those with comments or information pertaining to this project should file it with the Commission at the following address by June 12, 1998: David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426.

All filings should clearly show the following on the first page: Lassen Lodge Project, FERC No. 11157-001.

Intervenors are reminded of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure which require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person whose name appears on 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.

In addition to asking for written comments, we're holding two scoping meetings to solicit any verbal input and comments you may wish to offer on the scope of the EA. An agency scoping meeting will begin at 9:00 AM on May 12, 1998, at the California Department of Fish & Game, 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001. A public scoping meeting will begin at 7:00 PM on May 12, 1998, at California Department of Forestry, 604 Antelope Blvd., Red Bluff, CA 96080. The public and agencies may attend either meeting. There will also be a visit to the project on May 13, 1998,

to become more familiar with the proposed project. More information about these meetings and site visit is available in the scoping document.

Any questions regarding this notice may be directed to Mr. Surender Yepuri, Project Coordinator, at (202) 219-2847.

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

*Acting Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 98-9601 Filed 4-10-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

#### Sunshine Act Meeting

April 8, 1998.

The following Notice of Meeting is Published Pursuant to Section 3(a) of the Government in the Sunshine Act (Pub. L. No. 94-409), 5 U.S.C. 552B:

**AGENCY HOLDING MEETING:** Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

**DATE AND TIME:** April 15, 1998, 10:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room 2C, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426.

**STATUS:** Open.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:** Agenda.

\* Note—Items listed on the agenda may be deleted without further notice.

#### CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:

David P. Boergers, acting secretary, telephone (202) 208-0400. For a recording listing items stricken from or added to the meeting, call (202) 208-1627.

This is a list of matters to be considered by the commission. It does not include a listing of all papers relevant to the items on the agenda; however, all public documents may be examined in the reference and information center.

#### CONSENT AGENDA—HYDRO 696TH MEETING—APRIL 15, 1998, REGULAR MEETING (10:00 A.M.)

CAH-1.

DOCKET# P-2494, 011, PUGET SOUND ENERGY, INC.

CAH-2.

DOCKET# P-2527, 005, CENTRAL MAINE POWER COMPANY

CAH-3.

DOCKET# P-5984, 018, NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

CAH-4.

OMITTED

CAH-5.

DOCKET# P-2506, 033, UPPER PENINSULA POWER COMPANY

#### CONSENT AGENDA—ELECTRIC

CAE-1.