

is not or will not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that would preclude its use consistent with the requirements of the investment assistance. EDA shall determine at its sole discretion whether the matching share documentation adequately addresses the requirements of this section.

§ 312.10 Application components.

In addition to the criteria set forth in the FFO, to be considered for a RIS Program grant, eligible applicants must provide the following information:

- (a) A description of the regional innovation cluster supported by the proposed activity;
- (b) The extent to which the regional innovation cluster is supported by the private sector, State and local units of government, and other relevant stakeholders;
- (c) The methods that participants in the regional innovation cluster will use to encourage and solicit participation by all types of entities that might benefit from participation, including newly formed entities and rival existing participants;
- (d) The extent to which the regional innovation cluster is likely to stimulate innovation and have a positive effect on regional economic growth and development;
- (e) The capacity of participants in the regional innovation cluster to access, or contribute to, a well-trained workforce;
- (f) The ability of participants in the regional innovation cluster to attract additional funds to support the cluster with non-Federal funds; and
- (g) The likelihood that participants in the regional innovation cluster will be able to sustain activities after the grant expires.

§ 312.11 Application evaluation and selection criteria.

(a) EDA will evaluate and select complete applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria, funding priority considerations, availability of funding, competitiveness of the application, and requirements set forth in section 27(b) of Stevenson-Wydler, the FFO, and other applicable Federal statutes and regulations. All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

(b) EDA will endeavor to notify applicants as soon as practicable regarding whether their applications are selected for funding.

(c) Stevenson-Wydler does not require nor does EDA provide an appeal process for denial of applications for EDA investment assistance.

§ 312.12 General terms and conditions for investment assistance.

RIS Program grants are subject to all requirements contained in part 302 of this chapter, except §§ 302.2, 302.3, 302.9, and 302.10.

Subpart C—Regional Innovation Research and Information Program

§§ 312.13 through 312.17 [Reserved]

Dated: September 6, 2016.

Roy K.J. Williams,

Assistant Secretary for Economic Development.

[FR Doc. 2016-22286 Filed 9-20-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-24-P

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

18 CFR Parts 806 and 808

Review and Approval of Projects

AGENCY: Susquehanna River Basin Commission.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking; notice of public hearings.

SUMMARY: This document contains proposed rules that would amend the regulations of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (Commission) to clarify application requirements and standards for review of projects, amend the rules dealing with the mitigation of consumptive uses, add a subpart to provide for registration of grandfathered projects, and revise requirements dealing with hearings and enforcement actions. These rules are designed to enhance the Commission's existing authorities to manage the water resources of the basin and add regulatory clarity.

DATES: In addition, the Commission will be holding two informational webinars explaining the proposed rulemaking on October 11, 2016, and October 17, 2016. Instructions for registration for the webinars will be posted on the Commission's Web site. Comments on the proposed rulemaking may be submitted to the Commission on or before January 30, 2017. The Commission has scheduled four public hearings on the proposed rulemaking:

1. November 3, 2016, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or at the conclusion of public testimony, whichever is sooner; Harrisburg, PA.
2. November 9, 2016, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. or at the conclusion of public testimony, whichever is sooner; Binghamton, NY.
3. November 10, 2016, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. or at the conclusion of public testimony, whichever is sooner; Williamsport, PA.

4. December 8, 2016, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. or at the conclusion of public testimony, whichever is sooner; Annapolis, MD.

The locations of the public hearings are listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this document.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to: Jason E. Oyler, Esq., General Counsel, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, 4423 N. Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-1788, or by email to regcomments@srbc.net. The public hearings locations are:

1. Harrisburg—Pennsylvania State Capitol (East Wing, Room 8E-B), Commonwealth Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17120.
2. Binghamton—DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Binghamton (South Riverside Room), 225 Water Street, Binghamton, NY 13901.
3. Williamsport—Holiday Inn Williamsport (Gallery Room), 100 Pine Street, Williamsport, PA 17701.
4. Annapolis—Loews Annapolis Hotel (Powerhouse-Point Lookout), 126 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Those wishing to testify are asked to notify the Commission in advance, if possible, at the regular or electronic addresses given below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jason E. Oyler, Esq., General Counsel, telephone: 717-238-0423, ext. 1312; fax: 717-238-2436; email: joyler@srbc.net. Also, for further information on the proposed rulemaking, visit the Commission's Web site at <http://www.srbc.net>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Commission's regulations have not undergone a thorough review since the last comprehensive rulemaking in 2006. Many of these regulations remain unchanged. However, since initial implementation, the Commission recognizes the need for clarity in some sections and statement of procedure in others. These changes are designed to bring clarity and certainty to the regulated community. This rulemaking reflects the efforts of a comprehensive internal review by the Commission staff and review by the Commission's member jurisdictions. The rulemaking centers on a few key areas of the regulations: Project review, consumptive use mitigation, registration of grandfathered projects, and administrative procedures. The Commission proposed this rulemaking to clarify application requirements and standards for review of projects, amend the rules dealing with the mitigation of consumptive uses, add a subpart to provide for registration of grandfathered projects, and revise requirements dealing with hearings and enforcement

actions. Because the concept is a new addition to the regulations, the Commission believes that an explanation for the rationale for the proposed rules relating to the registration of grandfathered projects would be helpful for the public.

Sources and Activities That Predate Regulations

The Commission's regulations provide that certain withdrawals and pre-compact consumptive uses that are in excess of the Commission's regulatory thresholds do not require Commission approval under § 806.4(a) if those sources predated regulations, provided there is no environmental harm. This exemption from review and approval is commonly referred to as "grandfathering." Generally, pre-compact consumptive uses initiated prior to January 23, 1971, groundwater withdrawals initiated prior to July 13, 1978, and surface water withdrawals initiated prior to November 11, 1995, are considered "grandfathered" and do not need to apply for a regulatory approval by the Commission. The Commission's current regulations provide several mechanisms by which a grandfathered project must apply for regulatory approval, including a change in the nature of the use, change of ownership, an increase in the quantity of the withdrawal or use, or adding a new source.

However, in enacting the Compact that created the Commission, Congress and the participating states declared that . . .

the conservation, utilization, development, management and control of the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin under comprehensive multiple purpose planning will produce the greatest benefits and produce the most efficient service in the public interest. Compact Preamble Sect 1—emphasis added.

The Commission's "Comprehensive Plan for the Water Resources of the Susquehanna Basin" contains an objective to wisely manage the water resources of the Basin to assure short-term resource availability and long-term balance between healthy ecosystems and economic viability (SRBC Comprehensive Plan, 2013). The desired result of one of the key water resource needs, identified as Sustainable Water Development, is to regulate and plan for water resources development in a manner that maintains economic viability, protects instream users, and ensures ecological diversity; and meets immediate and future needs of the people of the basin for domestic, municipal, commercial, agricultural and

industrial water supply and recreational activities.

As part of this objective, the Commission recently completed a major effort to characterize water use and availability for the Susquehanna River Basin. The Cumulative Water Use and Availability Study (CWUAS) represents the most comprehensive analysis to date regarding water availability. The Commission is increasingly concerned about the availability of water to meet immediate and future needs as water is needed to satisfy the continuing prospect of growing population and increasing demands for drinking water, freshwater inflow to the Chesapeake Bay, power generation, industrial activity, commercial uses, recreation and ecological diversity. Water resources are neither limitless nor equally distributed across the basin, and in some areas the demand for and use of water resources may be approaching or exceeding the sustainable limit.

As part of the CWUAS, the Commission developed a comprehensive water use database by integrating water use records from the Commission, and its member jurisdictions of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland in an unprecedented compilation effort. Compiling accurate water use data is a common challenge for water resource agencies, even recognizing advances in accessing data records through electronic reporting for both the Commission and our member states. The study shows water availability in nearly 1 in 10 watersheds is sufficiently compromised to warrant additional analysis and improved knowledge of patterns of withdrawal and use.

The CWUAS also reveals the limitations of the currently available water use data. While these data include records of regulated public water supply withdrawals for all states, withdrawals for the remaining variety of self-supplied uses are commonly lacking with the exception of those projects regulated by the Commission. Coverage for unregulated withdrawals, including grandfathered projects, is provided through state registration programs and varies widely in data quality and completeness among the member jurisdictions. For the most part, data for consumptive use not regulated by the Commission are absent altogether.

At the time of its formation and adoption of its initial regulations, neither the Commission nor its member jurisdictions conducted any inventory of existing water users, their sources or the quantity of existing water use. Grandfathered water withdrawals and use are clearly factors in the

determination of sustainable water availability. The Commission's analysis estimates a total of 760 grandfathered projects with an estimated water use of 970 million gallons per day, which is approximately equal to the total existing regulated consumptive use approved by the Commission. With such large water quantities in question, it is obvious that some of the grandfathered projects are among the largest users of basin waters. Therefore, appropriate regulation and comprehensive planning for the use of the water resources are seriously hampered without accurate and reliable data regarding the quantity of the grandfathered uses and withdrawals. This is even more critical for areas identified as potentially stressed, water challenged or otherwise having limited water availability.

While our member jurisdictions have made efforts to collect water withdrawal data, and the Commission uses that data as available, our member jurisdictions do not comprehensively register consumptive water use. In addition, they do not have comprehensive historic data for legacy water users to effectively determine the quantity of water withdrawn prior to 1995 or the water consumptively used prior to 1971. This lack of comprehensive and reliable data hampers the Commission by creating significant gaps in our knowledge and data of water withdrawals and water use in the basin, which in turn hinders our ability to comprehensively manage the water resources of the basin and fulfill our regulatory and planning functions.

It is, therefore, appropriate for the Commission to act to address this knowledge gap as no other jurisdiction is solely capable of insuring the effectuation of the comprehensive plan. In these regulations the Commission is proposing a mechanism for acquiring accurate water use and withdrawal information for grandfathered projects through a required registration program. It is imperative that we have no misrepresentations about the sustainability of our water supply so that sound water resource decisions can be made for the benefit of all the basin's users. Grandfathered uses and withdrawals represent a longstanding gap in knowledge and, as such, have increasingly become a water management issue in the Commission's regulation and planning for water resources development.

Registration of grandfathered uses and withdrawals will definitively answer questions about the number of grandfathered projects, the locations of their sources, how much water they are withdrawing and from which water

bodies and aquifers, and how much of that water they are using consumptively. In short, it will allow water resource decisions to be made with more certainty and confidence. The registration requirements proposed do not require review and approval of dockets under § 806.4 and do not add any new pathways for a grandfathered project to be subject to review and approval if it registers in accordance with the proposed regulation.

The Commission expects the registration of grandfathered uses will achieve a number of crucial goals to allow better management of basin resources. The Commission will receive more consistent and complete data than what can be obtained through voluntary registration programs, such as peak quantities, patterns of usage and accurate locational data for withdrawals and uses. The data required for registration is more easily attainable data from the most recent five years, as opposed to historical data. This data will be more recent and based on more accurate and reliable metering and measurement devices. Registration will eliminate legacy issues by closing the knowledge gap about grandfathered withdrawals from and usage of the water resources of the basin. The information obtained through the registration will allow the Commission staff to conduct thorough water availability analyses.

Registration will also provide more direct benefits to the grandfathered projects by providing the Commission with complete, contemporary withdrawal and usage data that can be utilized by the Commission in evaluating new withdrawals or consumptive uses in the watersheds where the grandfathered projects operate and allow the Commission to better prevent impacts and interference to the operations of grandfathered projects by newer projects. Registration will also provide unambiguous determinations concerning pre-regulation quantities of withdrawals and consumptive uses in the basin for both project sponsors and the Commission, providing much more certainty with regards to how a grandfathered project may operate and retain their existing exempt status and avoid the full project review and approval process. As such, project sponsors can plan and anticipate when they might fall under the Commission's jurisdiction and avoid situations where they unknowingly could fall into noncompliance, as currently happens.

Registration also should provide for ongoing information concerning contemporary water withdrawals and

uses at grandfathered projects, to meet Commission management goals of the Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Supporting water conservation measures through monitoring and reporting data;
- Making informed regulatory decisions about cumulative effect on other uses/withdrawals, including analyses for low flow protection (passby flows) and consumptive use mitigation;
- Projecting future water availability to support and inform development decisions, including siting of new facilities critical for water supply, energy development and industrial needs; and
- Identifying critical water planning areas where potential shortages due to drought are projected or intense competition among water users exists.

Registration of grandfathered projects allows the Commission to continue to allow those projects to receive the exemption from the Commission's review and approval under § 806.4 but also fulfills the Commission's need to have accurate, current and reliable data on the amount of the water withdrawals and consumptive use of grandfathered projects to use in the Commission's management decisions for the water resources of the basin. Registration is a one-time event that allows a grandfathered project to continue to operate under the exemption from the Commission's regulations for review and approval of projects, and the only ongoing obligation of project registration is to periodically report withdrawal and usage data. Registration is not review and approval of the project and the proposed rulemaking does not eliminate the grandfathering exemption for projects that register. This means a grandfathered project will not need to meet the requirements and standards set forth in part 806, subparts A through D, which include making an application to Commission, conducting an aquifer test for groundwater withdrawals, evaluation for the sustainability of water withdrawals, evaluation of impact on surface water features, wetlands, other water supplies and wells, establishment of passby flows to protect surface waters, imposition of mitigation for withdrawals or consumptive use, or imposition of conditions or limits on the grandfathered withdrawal or consumptive use. In addition, the Commission has designed the registration to be as simple and accessible as possible to greatly minimize costs, and/or eliminate the need for a grandfathered project to engage a consultant to complete the registration process.

New Subpart E and Revisions to 18 CFR 806.4—Registration of Grandfathered Projects

New subpart E sets forth the rules related to registration of grandfathered projects.

Section 806.40 defines the grandfathered projects within the scope of the regulations and registration requirement.

Section 806.41 provides that grandfathered projects must register within a two-year window or they become subject to review and approval by the Commission in accordance with the Commission's project review regulations and standards. The proposal also contains corresponding changes in § 806.4(a)(1)(iii) and (a)(2)(iv) to clearly provide when a project with some grandfathered aspect or element is subject to review and approval.

The proposed regulations in §§ 806.40(b) and 806.41(c) do not protect grandfathered projects that can be shown to have clearly lost grandfathered status under the regulations in effect at the time the relevant action took place. For example, a grandfathered project that underwent a change of ownership, but did not seek review and approval as required by the §§ 806.4 and 806.6, is not eligible to register and will be required to submit an application for review and approval of the project.

Other projects that have a grandfathered aspect, but that do not withdraw or use water at a jurisdictional threshold to qualify as a grandfathered project under § 806.40, are not eligible to register and will be subject to review and approval if those projects ever withdraw or consumptively use water above the jurisdictional thresholds, pursuant to §§ 806.4(a)(1)(iii)(B), 806.4(a)(2)(iv)(B), and 806.40(c).

Paragraph 806.41(e) provides that the Commission may establish fees in accordance with § 806.35. The Commission will establish any registration fee simultaneously at the time of the adoption of a final rule. Because the amount of any fee will likely be of interest to the public, the Commission, in conjunction with this proposed rulemaking, is proposing a staggered fee for registration. Section 806.41(a) establishes a two-year window during which grandfathered projects must register. The Commission proposes that project sponsors that submit their registration within the first 6 months of that two-year registration period will pay no fee. During the next 6 months of the registration period, the fee will be \$500. During the last year of the registration period, the fee will be

\$1,000. The registration fee is a one-time fee. By providing a no fee option during the first six months of the registration period, the Commission intends to provide relief for project sponsors that may be concerned about payment of a registration fee and to incentivize project sponsors to register sooner which will lead to an earlier submission of the data that the Commission is seeking through the registration process.

Section 806.42 outlines the primary information needs of the Commission for registration of withdrawals and consumptive uses. Because of the problems frequently encountered with producing reliable historical data, paragraph 806.42(a)(6) requests the most recent five years of quantity data for a project's withdrawals and consumptive use for at least the past five calendar years.

Section 806.43 provides that the Commission shall review the project's current metering and monitoring for its grandfathered withdrawals and consumptive uses. The Commission may require the project to follow a metering and monitoring plan to ensure that withdrawal and use quantities are accurate and reliable. This section also provides for ongoing reporting of quantities for grandfathered withdrawals and consumptive uses. The Commission may accept quantities reported under the requirements of the applicable member jurisdiction in lieu of additional monitoring data. This information is vital to the Commission in its ongoing evaluation of the water resources of the basin and will be used in revising the Commission's Comprehensive Plan, in its ongoing evaluation of cumulative water use in the basin and to provide data to assess and evaluate impacts of new projects seeking review and approval by the Commission.

Sections 806.44 and 806.45 provide a process for the determination of grandfathered quantities for withdrawals and consumptive uses. This determination will be made by the Executive Director taking into account the most reliable data. An increase above this amount would require review and approval under §§ 806.4(a)(1)(iii)(A) and 806.4(a)(2)(iv)(A). A project will be able to appeal this determination to the Commission. Any hearing conducted will be done in accordance with the Commission's appeal procedures in Part 808.

Project Review Application Procedures—18 CFR Subpart B

Section 806.11 is revised to include a specific reference to § 801.12(c)(2), noting that preliminary consultations, or

pre-application meetings, are encouraged but not mandatory except for electric power generation projects.

Section 806.12 is revised to clarify when project sponsors will perform a constant-rate aquifer test and to clarify that reviews of aquifer test plan submittals are subject to termination of review under § 806.16.

Section 806.14 detailing the contents of applications to the Commission is rewritten. The new section as proposed better aligns to the actual items sought in the Commission's applications, as well as provides required items specific to each type of approval (*i.e.*, groundwater withdrawal, surface water withdrawal, consumptive use). The proposed regulation includes new requirements specific to projects such as mine and construction dewatering, water resources remediation, and gravity-drained acid mine drainage (AMD) remediation facilities to align with the newly proposed standards for these types of projects under § 806.23(b)(5). The proposal also includes specific requirements for renewal applications.

This section as rewritten retains the requirement for an alternatives analysis for new projects, if prompted by a request from the Commission. However, for new surface water withdrawal projects, an alternatives analysis *must* be performed in settings with a drainage area of 50 miles square or less, or in a waterway with exceptional water quality.

Section 806.15 regarding notice requirements for applications is revised to provide notice to appropriate county agencies, removing the specific reference to county planning agencies. Appropriate county agencies include the county governing body, county planning agencies and county conservation districts. Section 806.15(b)(3) is added to allow the Commission or Executive Director to allow notification of property owners by other means where the property is served by a public water supply.

Standards for Review and Approval—18 CFR Subpart C

Section 806.21 is revised to mention that a project must be "feasible" to align it with the standard presently used for projects during review to determine that they are feasible from both a financial and engineering perspective.

Section 806.22 regarding standards for the consumptive use of water is revised. The proposed revisions lower the 90-day standard for consumptive use mitigation to 45 days and require a mitigation plan that can have several elements and encourages blended

mitigation options. The purpose of these changes is to reduce the barriers to project sponsors finding their own mitigation and to correspondingly reduce the number of projects paying the consumptive use mitigation fee. Analysis of the past 100 plus years of river flow records show that the overwhelming majority of low flow/drought events in the Basin are adequately covered by a 45-day consumptive use mitigation standard.

Section 806.22(b) is also revised to clarify that when a project is subject to review and approval and also has an element of pre-compact consumptive use, the project sponsor will be required to provide mitigation going forward for this consumptive use if the project is located in a water critical area. The location of a project in a water critical area will also be a factor used by the Commission in determining the manner of acceptable mitigation under paragraph (c). A definition of water critical area is included in § 806.3 that will rely on both the existing member jurisdiction designations and the ongoing efforts by the Commission to identify areas where water resources are limited or the demand for water has exceeded or is close to exceeding the sustainable supply. Any action to identify a water critical area will be taken by a separate action of the Commission and may be subject to a public hearing under the revisions to § 808.1(b)(4).

Paragraph 806.22(e)(1) is amended to allow a project sourced by more than one public water supply to be eligible for an Approval by Rule for consumptive use as long as the public water supplies are the sole source of water for the project. New § 806.22(e)(2) and (3) were added so both the Approvals by Rule in paragraph (e) and (f) had matching procedures. The time frame for making notice was extended to 20 days in § 806.22(f)(3) to match the changes previously made to § 806.15, related to notice, during the last Commission rulemaking.

Section 806.23 related to standards for withdrawals is amended to include elements that presently form the basis of conditions to approvals for withdrawals. The proposal clarifies that the Commission can establish conditions based on the project's effect on groundwater and surface water availability, including cumulative uses and effects on wetlands. This section is clarified to expressly include the Commission's practice of establishing and requiring a total system limit on projects.

A new § 806.23(b)(5) is added to provide special review provisions for

projects consisting of mine dewatering, water resources remediation, and gravity-drained AMD facilities. Because the nature of these types of facilities is fundamentally different from the other withdrawal projects that come before the Commission and because they are heavily regulated by our member jurisdictions, the Commission may appropriately limit consideration of adverse impacts of these projects on groundwater availability, causing permanent loss of aquifer storage and lowering of groundwater levels.

Hearings and Enforcement Actions—Part 808

Section 808.1 is revised. The revised section in paragraph (a) identifies those actions that must have a public hearing pursuant to the Susquehanna River Basin Compact. Paragraph (b) outlines all other instances when the Commission may hold a hearing. No changes are contemplated to how the Commission currently conducts its hearings. Paragraphs (c) through (h) are revised to both update the regulations and also to reflect the Commission's current public hearing procedures.

Section 808.2 is revised to amend the scope and procedure for administrative appeals to the Commission. The non-mandatory appeal language is removed and paragraph (a) is revised to provide a mandatory appeal to the Commission of a final action or decision made by the Executive Director, including a non-exclusive list of appealable actions. Where the Commission itself takes a final action, including actions or decisions it makes on appeal of Executive Director actions, those decisions must be appealed to the appropriate federal district court in accordance with the provisions of section 3.10 of the Compact. This section also clarifies that the Commission will determine the manner in which it will hear an appeal, including whether a hearing is granted or whether the issue will be decided through submission of briefs.

Section 808.11 is revised to expressly recognize directives issued from Commission staff.

Section 808.14 is revised to provide the Executive Director broader authority to issue compliance orders. These orders would be appealable to the Commission. Paragraph (e) is added to expressly recognize Consent Orders and Agreements in the regulations. These agreements are vital to the Commission in fulfilling its compliance and enforcement obligations under the Compact and allow for a constructive resolution of most enforcement actions.

Section 808.15 is revised to allow the Executive Director to determine the appropriateness of a civil penalty in the first instance in a show cause proceeding. Any decision of the Executive Director is appealable to the Commission. Paragraph (c) is added to reflect the Commission's intent that any finding regarding the imposition of a civil penalty by the Executive Director shall be based on the relevant policies and guidelines adopted by the Commission, as well as the relevant law and facts and information presented as a part of the show cause proceeding.

Section 808.16 regarding civil penalty criteria is revised to be consistent with other changes in this proposed rulemaking, as well as add a new factor regarding the punitive effect of a civil penalty on a violator.

Section 808.17 is revised to be consistent with other changes in the proposed rulemaking.

Section 808.18 is revised to allow the Executive Director to enter into settlement agreements to resolve enforcement actions. Currently all settlement agreements must be brought to the Commission for approval at the Commission's quarterly meeting with the exception of settlements under \$10,000 pursuant to Commission Resolution 2014–15. The revision provides greater authority for the Executive Director to approve settlement agreements, but retains the ability of the Commission to require certain types of settlements to be submitted for the Commission's approval through adoption of a Resolution.

Miscellaneous Changes

Section 806.1 is revised to include diversions within the scope of Part 806, which was an omission. The address of the Commission is also updated.

Section 806.3 related to definitions is revised. The definition of facility is revised to include consumptive use, which was an omission. The definition of production fluids is revised to include other fluids associated with the development of natural gas resources. The Commission routinely receives questions regarding other fluids, such as stormwater captured and stored in a drilling rig apparatus, and what rules apply to such water. The Commission is electing to treat all such water as a production fluid to ensure it is accounted for. A definition of wetland is added that mirrors the definition used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for its regulatory program.

Section 806.4 related to projects requiring review and approval is revised, in addition to the changes

discussed regarding new subpart E. Paragraph (a) is revised to clarify that aquifer testing pursuant to § 806.12 is not a project governed by § 806.4. Paragraph (a)(2), related to the regulation of withdrawals, is revised to clarify that a project includes all of its sources and to include a reference to the general project review standards in § 806.21.

A new paragraph (a)(3)(vii) is added to allow flowback and production fluids into the basin for in-basin treatment or disposal. The Commission does not want its regulations to be a disincentive to treatment of flowback where the activity is conducted in accordance with the environmental standards and requirements of its member jurisdictions.

Section 806.30 related to monitoring is revised and clarified. The revisions provide that measuring, metering or monitoring devices must be installed per the specifications and recommendations of the device's manufacturer. The revisions clarify that the Commission may require measurement of groundwater levels in wells other than production wells and may require other monitoring for environmental impacts.

Section 806.31 related to the term of approvals is revised to provide that if a project sponsor submits an application one month prior to the expiration of an ABR or NOI approval, the project sponsor may continue to operate under the expired approval while the Commission reviews the application. In the Commission's experience, the six month time frame currently in the regulation and still applicable to existing Commission docket approvals is longer than necessary for ABR approvals.

Transition Issues

The Commission is contemplating that all changes proposed in this rulemaking will take effect immediately upon publication in the **Federal Register**, with the exception of the adoption of Subpart E (related to registration of grandfathered projects) and the corresponding changes to § 806.4(a)(1)(iii) and (a)(2)(iv), which would be effective six months after the date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

List of Subjects in 18 CFR Parts 806 and 808

Administrative practice and procedure, Water resources.

Accordingly, for the reasons set forth in the preamble, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission proposes to amend 18 CFR parts 806 and 808 as follows:

PART 806—REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PROJECTS

- 1. The authority citation for part 806 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Secs. 3.4, 3.5(5), 3.8, 3.10 and 15.2, Public Law 91–575, 84 Stat. 1509 *et seq.*

- 2. Amend § 806.1 by revising paragraphs (a) and (f) to read as follows:

§ 806.1 Scope.

(a) This part establishes the scope and procedures for review and approval of projects under section 3.10 of the Susquehanna River Basin Compact, Public Law 91–575, 84 Stat. 1509 *et seq.*, (the compact) and establishes special standards under section 3.4(2) of the compact governing water withdrawals, the consumptive use of water, and diversions. The special standards established pursuant to section 3.4(2) shall be applicable to all water withdrawals and consumptive uses in accordance with the terms of those standards, irrespective of whether such withdrawals and uses are also subject to project review under section 3.10. This part, and every other part of 18 CFR chapter VIII, shall also be incorporated into and made a part of the comprehensive plan.

(f) Any Commission forms or documents referenced in this part may be obtained from the Commission at 4423 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110, or from the Commission's Web site at <http://www.srbcb.net>.

- 3. In § 806.3:

- a. Revise the definitions for “Facility” and “Production fluids”; and
 ■ b. Add, in alphabetical order, definitions for “Water critical area” and “Wetland”.

The revisions and additions read as follows:

§ 806.3 Definitions.

Facility. Any real or personal property, within or without the basin, and improvements thereof or thereon, and any and all rights of way, water, water rights, plants, structures, machinery, and equipment acquired, constructed, operated, or maintained for the beneficial use of water resources or related land uses or otherwise including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, any and all things and appurtenances necessary, useful, or convenient for the control, collection, storage, withdrawal, diversion, consumptive use, release, treatment, transmission, sale, or exchange of water; or for navigation thereon, or the development and use of

hydroelectric energy and power, and public recreational facilities; of the propagation of fish and wildlife; or to conserve and protect the water resources of the basin or any existing or future water supply source, or to facilitate any other uses of any of them.

Production fluids. Water or formation fluids recovered at the wellhead of a producing hydrocarbon well as a byproduct of the production activity or other fluids associated with the development of natural gas resources.

Water critical area. A watershed or sub-watershed identified by the Commission where there are significantly limited water resources, where existing or future demand for water exceeds or has the potential to exceed the safe yield of available surface water and/or groundwater resources, or where the area has been identified or designated by a member jurisdiction as requiring more intensive water planning.

Wetlands. Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

- 4. Amend § 806.4 by revising paragraphs (a) introductory text, paragraph (a)(1)(iii), (a)(2) introductory text, and paragraph (a)(2)(iv), and adding paragraph (a)(3)(vii) to read as follows:

§ 806.4 Projects requiring review and approval.

(a) Except for activities relating to site evaluation, to aquifer testing under § 806.12 or to those activities authorized under § 806.34, no person shall undertake any of the following projects without prior review and approval by the Commission. The project sponsor shall submit an application in accordance with subpart B of this part and shall be subject to the applicable standards in subpart C of this part.

(1) * * *

(iii) With respect to projects that existed prior to January 23, 1971, any project:

(A) Registered in accordance with subpart E of this part that increases its consumptive use by any amount over the quantity determined under § 806.44;

(B) Increasing its consumptive use to an average of 20,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day period; or

(C) That fails to register its consumptive use in accordance with subpart E of this part.

(2) **Withdrawals.** Any project, including all of its sources, described below shall require an application to be submitted in accordance with § 806.13, and shall be subject to the standards set forth in §§ 806.21 and 806.23. Hydroelectric projects, except to the extent that such projects involve a withdrawal, shall be exempt from the requirements of this section regarding withdrawals; provided, however, that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as exempting hydroelectric projects from review and approval under any other category of project requiring review and approval as set forth in this section, § 806.5, or part 801 of this chapter. The taking or removal of water by a public water supplier indirectly through another public water supply system or another water user's facilities shall constitute a withdrawal hereunder.

(iv) With respect to groundwater projects that existed prior to July 13, 1978, surface water projects that existed prior to November 11, 1995, or projects that existed prior to January 1, 2007, with multiple sources involving a withdrawal of a consecutive 30-day average of 100,000 gpd or more that did not require Commission review and approval, any project:

(A) Registered in accordance with Subpart E that increases its withdrawal by any amount over the quantity determined under § 806.44;

(B) Increasing its withdrawal individually or cumulatively from all sources to an average of 100,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day period; or

(C) That fails to register its withdrawals in accordance with subpart E.

(3) * * *

(vii) The diversion of any flowback or production fluids from hydrocarbon development projects located outside the basin to an in-basin treatment or disposal facility authorized under separate government approval to accept flowback or production fluids, shall not be subject to separate review and approval as a diversion under this paragraph, provided the fluids are handled, transported and stored in compliance with all standards and

requirements of the applicable member jurisdiction.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 806.11 by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 806.11 Preliminary consultations.

* * * * *

(b) Except for project sponsors of electric power generation projects under § 801.12(c)(2) of this chapter, preliminary consultation is optional for the project sponsor (except with respect to aquifer test plans under § 806.12) but shall not relieve the sponsor from complying with the requirements of the compact or with this part.

■ 6. Amend § 806.12 by revising paragraph (a) and adding paragraph (f) to read as follows:

§ 806.12 Constant-rate aquifer testing.

(a) Prior to submission of an application pursuant to § 806.13, a project sponsor seeking approval for a new groundwater withdrawal, a renewal of an expiring groundwater withdrawal, or an increase of a groundwater withdrawal shall perform a constant-rate aquifer test in accordance with this section.

* * * * *

(f) Review of submittals under § 806.12 may be terminated by the Commission in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 806.16.

■ 7. Revise § 806.14 to read as follows:

§ 806.14 Contents of application.

(a) Applications for a new project or a major modification to an existing approved project shall include, but not be limited to, the following information and, where applicable, shall be subject to the requirements in paragraph (b) of this section and submitted on forms and in the manner prescribed by the Commission.

(1) Identification of project sponsor including any and all proprietors, corporate officers or partners, the mailing address of the same, and the name of the individual authorized to act for the sponsor.

(2) Project location, including latitude and longitude coordinates in decimal degrees accurate to within 10 meters, the project location displayed on a map with a 7.5-minute USGS topographic base, and evidence of legal access to the property upon which the project is proposed.

(3) Project description, including: Purpose, proposed quantity to be withdrawn or consumed, if applicable, and identification of all water sources related to the project including location and date of initiation of each source.

(4) Anticipated impact of the project, including impacts on existing water withdrawals, nearby surface waters, and threatened or endangered species and its habitats.

(5) The reasonably foreseeable need for the proposed quantity of water to be withdrawn or consumed, including supporting calculations, and the projected demand for the term of the approval.

(6) A metering plan that adheres to § 806.30.

(7) Evidence of coordination and compliance with member jurisdictions regarding all necessary permits or approvals required for the project from other federal, state or local government agencies having jurisdiction over the project.

(8) Project estimated completion date and estimated construction schedule.

(9) Draft notices required by § 806.15.

(10) The Commission may also require the following information as deemed necessary:

(i) Engineering feasibility;

(ii) Ability of the project sponsor to fund the project.

(b) Additional information is required for a new project or a major modification to an existing approved project as follows.

(1) *Surface water.* (i) Water use and availability.

(ii) Project setting, including surface water characteristics, identification of wetlands, and site development considerations.

(iii) Description and design of intake structure.

(iv) Anticipated impact of the proposed project on local flood risk, recreational uses, fish and wildlife and natural environment features.

(v) Alternatives analysis for a withdrawal proposed in settings with a drainage area of 50 miles square or less, or in a waterway with exceptional water quality, or as required by the Commission.

(2) *Groundwater*—(i) *Constant-rate aquifer tests.* With the exception of mining related withdrawals solely for the purpose of dewatering; construction dewatering withdrawals and withdrawals for the sole purpose of groundwater or below water table remediation generally which are addressed in paragraph (b)(6) of this section, the project sponsor shall provide an interpretative report that includes all monitoring and results of a constant-rate aquifer test consistent with § 806.12 and an updated groundwater availability estimate if changed from the aquifer test plan. The project sponsor shall obtain Commission approval of the

test procedures prior to initiation of the constant-rate aquifer test.

(ii) Water use and availability.

(iii) Project setting, including nearby surface water features.

(iv) Groundwater elevation monitoring plan for all production wells.

(v) Alternatives analysis as required by the Commission.

(3) *Consumptive use.* (i) Consumptive use calculations, and a mitigation plan consistent with § 806.22(b).

(ii) Water conservation methods, design or technology proposed or considered

(iii) Alternatives analysis as required by the Commission.

(4) *Into basin diversions.* (i) Provide the necessary information to demonstrate that the proposed project will meet the standards in § 806.24(c).

(ii) Identification of the source and water quality characteristics of the water to be diverted.

(5) *Out of basin diversions.* (i) Provide the necessary information to demonstrate that the proposed project will meet the standards in § 806.24(b).

(ii) Project setting.

(6) Other projects, including without limitation, mine dewatering, construction dewatering, water resources remediation projects, and gravity-drained AMD remediation facilities

(i) In lieu of aquifer testing, report(s) prepared for any other purpose or as required by other governmental regulatory agencies that provides a demonstration of the hydrogeologic and/or hydrologic effects and limits of said effects due to operation of the proposed project and effects on local water availability.

(c) All applications for renewal of expiring approved projects shall include, but not be limited to, the following information, and, where applicable, shall be subject to the requirements in paragraph (d) of this section and submitted on forms and in the manner prescribed by the Commission.

(1) Identification of project sponsor including any and all proprietors, corporate officers or partners, the mailing address of the same, and the name of the individual authorized to act for the sponsor.

(2) Project location, including latitude and longitude coordinates in decimal degrees accurate to within 10 meters, the project location displayed on map with a 7.5-minute USGS topographic base, and evidence of legal access to the property upon which the project is located.

(3) Project description, to include, but not be limited to: Purpose, proposed

quantity to be withdrawn or consumed if applicable, identification of all water sources related to the project including location and date of initiation of each source, and any proposed project modifications.

(4) The reasonably foreseeable need for the requested renewal of the quantity of water to be withdrawn or consumed, including supporting calculations, and the projected demand for the term of the approval.

(5) An as-built and approved metering plan.

(6) Copies of permits from member jurisdictions regarding all necessary permits or approvals obtained for the project from other federal, state or local government agencies having jurisdiction over the project.

(7) Copy of any approved mitigation or monitoring plan and any related as-built for the expiring project.

(8) Demonstration of registration of all withdrawals or consumptive uses in accordance with the applicable state requirements.

(9) Draft notices required by § 806.15.

(d) Additional information is required for the following applications for renewal of expiring approved projects.

(1) *Surface water*. (i) Historic water use quantities and timing of use.

(ii) Changes to stream flow or quality during the term of the expiring approval.

(iii) Changes to the facility design.

(iv) Any proposed changes to the previously authorized purpose.

(2) *Groundwater*—(i) *Constant-rate aquifer tests*. The project sponsor shall provide an interpretative report that includes all monitoring and results of any constant-rate aquifer testing previously completed or submitted to support the original approval. In lieu of a testing report, historic operational data pumping and elevation data may be considered. Those projects that did not have constant-rate aquifer testing completed for the original approval that was consistent with § 806.12 or sufficient historic operational pumping and groundwater elevation data may be required to complete constant-rate aquifer testing consistent with § 806.12, prepare and submit an interpretative report that includes all monitoring and results of any constant-rate aquifer test.

(ii) An interpretative report providing analysis and comparison of current and historic water withdrawal and groundwater elevation data with previously completed hydro report.

(iii) Current groundwater availability analysis assessing the availability of water during a 1-in-10 year recurrence interval under the existing conditions within the recharge area and predicted

for term of renewal (*i.e.*, other users, discharges, and land development within the groundwater recharge area).

(iv) Groundwater elevation monitoring plan for all production wells.

(3) *Consumptive use*. (i) Consumptive use calculations, and a copy of the approved plan or method for mitigation consistent with § 806.22.

(ii) Changes to the facility design;

(iii) Any proposed changes to the previously authorized purpose;

(4) *Into basin diversion*. (i) Provide the necessary information to demonstrate that the proposed project will meet the standards in § 806.24(c). (ii) Identification of the source and water quality characteristics of the water to be diverted.

(5) *Out of basin diversion*. (i) Historic water use quantities and timing of use;

(ii) Changes to stream flow or quality during the term of the expiring approval;

(iii) Changes to the facility design;

(iv) Any proposed changes to the previously authorized purpose;

(6) Other projects, including without limitation, mine dewatering, water resources remediation projects, and gravity-drained AMD facilities

(i) Copy of approved report(s) prepared for any other purpose or as required by other governmental regulatory agencies that provides a demonstration of the hydrogeologic and/or hydrologic effects and limits of said effects due to operation of the project and effects on local water availability.

(ii) Any data or reports that demonstrate effects of the project are consistent with those reports provided in paragraph (d)(6)(i).

(iii) Demonstration of continued need for expiring approved water source and quantity.

(e) A report about the project prepared for any other purpose, or an application for approval prepared for submission to a member jurisdiction, may be accepted by the Commission provided the said report or application addresses all necessary items on the Commission's form or listed in this section, as appropriate.

(f) Applications for minor modifications must be complete and will be on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Commission. Applications for minor modifications must contain the following:

(1) Description of the project;

(2) Description of all sources, consumptive uses and diversions related to the project;

(3) Description of the requested modification;

(4) Statement of the need for the requested modification; and

(5) Demonstration that the anticipated impact of the requested modification will not adversely impact the water resources of the basin;

(g) For any applications, the Executive Director or Commission may require other information not otherwise listed in this section.

■ 8. Amend § 806.15 by revising paragraph (a), adding paragraph (b)(3) and revising paragraph (g) to read as follows:

§ 806.15 Notice of application.

(a) Except with respect to paragraphs (h) and (i) of this section, any project sponsor submitting an application to the Commission shall provide notice thereof to the appropriate agency of the member State, each municipality in which the project is located, and the county and the appropriate county agencies in which the project is located. The project sponsor shall also publish notice of submission of the application at least once in a newspaper of general circulation serving the area in which the project is located. The project sponsor shall also meet any of the notice requirements set forth in paragraphs (b) through (f) of this section, if applicable. All notices required under this section shall be provided or published no later than 20 days after submission of the application to the Commission and shall contain a description of the project, its purpose, the requested quantity of water to be withdrawn, obtained from sources other than withdrawals, or consumptively used, and the address, electronic mail address, and phone number of the project sponsor and the Commission. All such notices shall be in a form and manner as prescribed by the Commission

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(3) For groundwater withdrawal applications, the Commission or Executive Director may allow notification of property owners through alternate methods where the property is served by a public water supply.

* * * * *

(g) The project sponsor shall provide the Commission with a copy of the United States Postal Service return receipt for the notifications to agencies of member States, municipalities and appropriate county agencies required under paragraph (a) of this section. The project sponsor shall also provide certification on a form provided by the Commission that it has published the newspaper notice(s) required by this section and made the landowner

notifications as required under paragraph (b) of this section, if applicable. Until these items are provided to the Commission, processing of the application will not proceed. The project sponsor shall maintain all proofs of publication and records of notices sent under this section for the duration of the approval related to such notices.

* * * * *

■ 9. Amend § 806.21 by revising paragraphs (a) and (c)(1) to read as follows:

§ 806.21 General standards.

(a) A project shall be feasible and not be detrimental to the proper conservation, development, management, or control of the water resources of the basin.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) The Commission may suspend the review of any application under this part if the project is subject to the lawful jurisdiction of any member jurisdiction or any political subdivision thereof, and such member jurisdiction or political subdivision has disapproved or denied the project. Where such disapproval or denial is reversed on appeal, the appeal is final, and the project sponsor provides the Commission with a certified copy of the decision, the Commission shall resume its review of the application. Where, however, an application has been suspended hereunder for a period greater than three years, the Commission may terminate its review. Thereupon, the Commission shall notify the project sponsor of such termination and that the application fee paid by the project sponsor is forfeited. The project sponsor may reactivate the terminated application by reapplying to the Commission, providing evidence of its receipt of all necessary governmental approvals and, at the discretion of the Commission, submitting new or updated information.

* * * * *

■ 10. Revise § 806.22 to read as follows:

§ 806.22 Standards for consumptive use of water.

(a) The project sponsors of all consumptive water uses subject to review and approval under § 806.4, § 806.5, or § 806.6 of this part shall comply with this section.

(b) *Mitigation.* All project sponsors whose consumptive use of water is subject to review and approval under § 806.4, § 806.5, § 806.6, or § 806.17 of this part shall mitigate such consumptive use, including any pre-compact consumptive use if located in a water critical area. Except to the extent that the project involves the diversion of

the waters out of the basin, public water supplies shall be exempt from the requirements of this section regarding consumptive use; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt individual consumptive users connected to any such public water supply from the requirements of this section. The Commission shall require mitigation in accordance with an approved mitigation plan. The proposed mitigation plan shall include the method or combination of the following methods of mitigation:

(1) During low flow periods as may be designated by the Commission for consumptive use mitigation.

(i) Reduce withdrawal from the approved source(s), in an amount equal to the project's total consumptive use, and withdraw water from alternative surface water storage or aquifers or other underground storage chambers or facilities approved by the Commission, from which water can be withdrawn for a period of 45 days without impact.

(ii) Release water for flow augmentation, in an amount equal to the project's total consumptive use, from surface water storage or aquifers, or other underground storage chambers or facilities approved by the Commission, from which water can be withdrawn for a period of 45 days without impact.

(iii) Discontinue the project's consumptive use, except that reduction of project sponsor's consumptive use to less than 20,000 gpd during periods of low flow shall not constitute discontinuance.

(2) Use, as a source of consumptive use water, surface storage that is subject to maintenance of a conservation release acceptable to the Commission. In any case of failure to provide the specified conservation release, such project shall provide mitigation in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) of this section for the calendar year in which such failure occurs, and the Commission will reevaluate the continued acceptability of the conservation release.

(3) Provide monetary payment to the Commission, for all water consumptively used over the course of a year, in an amount and manner prescribed by the Commission.

(4) Implement other alternatives approved by the Commission.

(c) *Determination of manner of mitigation.* The Commission will, in its sole discretion, determine the acceptable manner of mitigation to be provided by project sponsors whose consumptive use of water is subject to review and approval. Such a determination will be made after considering the project's location,

including whether the project is located in a water critical area, source characteristics, anticipated amount of consumptive use, proposed method of mitigation and their effects on the purposes set forth in § 806.2 of this part, and any other pertinent factors. The Commission may modify, as appropriate, the manner of mitigation, including the magnitude and timing of any mitigating releases, required in a project approval.

(d) *Quality of water released for mitigation.* The physical, chemical and biological quality of water released for mitigation shall at all times meet the quality required for the purposes listed in § 806.2, as applicable.

(e) *Approval by rule for consumptive uses.* (1) Except with respect to projects involving hydrocarbon development subject to the provisions of paragraph (f) of this section, any project who is solely supplied water for consumptive use by public water supply may be approved by the Executive Director under this paragraph (e) in accordance with the following, unless the Executive Director determines that the project cannot be adequately regulated under this approval by rule.

(2) *Notification of intent.* Prior to undertaking a project or increasing a previously approved quantity of consumptive use, the project sponsor shall submit a notice of intent (NOI) on forms prescribed by the Commission, and the appropriate application fee, along with any required attachments.

(3) Within 20 days after submittal of an NOI under paragraph (f)(2) of this section, the project sponsor shall satisfy the notice requirements set forth in § 806.15.

(4) *Metering, daily use monitoring, and quarterly reporting.* The project sponsor shall comply with metering, daily use monitoring, and quarterly reporting as specified in § 806.30.

(5) *Standard conditions.* The standard conditions set forth in § 806.21 shall apply to projects approved by rule.

(6) *Mitigation.* The project sponsor shall comply with mitigation in accordance with § 806.22 (b)(2) or (3).

(7) *Compliance with other laws.* The project sponsor shall obtain all necessary permits or approvals required for the project from other federal, state or local government agencies having jurisdiction over the project. The Commission reserves the right to modify, suspend or revoke any approval under this paragraph (e) if the project sponsor fails to obtain or maintain such approvals.

(8) The Executive Director may grant, deny, suspend, revoke, modify or condition an approval to operate under

this approval by rule, or renew an existing approval by rule previously granted hereunder, and will notify the project sponsor of such determination, including the quantity of consumptive use approved.

(9) Approval by rule shall be effective upon written notification from the Executive Director to the project sponsor, shall expire 15 years from the date of such notification, and shall be deemed to rescind any previous consumptive use approvals.

(f) *Approval by rule for consumptive use related to unconventional natural gas and other hydrocarbon development.* (1) Any unconventional natural gas development project, or any hydrocarbon development project subject to review and approval under § 806.4, 806.5, or 806.6, shall be subject to review and approval by the Executive Director under this paragraph (f) regardless of the source or sources of water being used consumptively.

(2) *Notification of intent.* Prior to undertaking a project or increasing a previously approved quantity of consumptive use, the project sponsor shall submit a notice of intent (NOI) on forms prescribed by the Commission, and the appropriate application fee, along with any required attachments.

(3) Within 20 days after submittal of an NOI under paragraph (f)(2) of this section, the project sponsor shall satisfy the notice requirements set forth in § 806.15.

(4) The project sponsor shall comply with metering, daily use monitoring and quarterly reporting as specified in § 806.30, or as otherwise required by the approval by rule. Daily use monitoring shall include amounts delivered or withdrawn per source, per day, and amounts used per gas well, per day, for well drilling, hydrofracture stimulation, hydrostatic testing, and dust control. The foregoing shall apply to all water, including stimulation additives, flowback, drilling fluids, formation fluids and production fluids, utilized by the project. The project sponsor shall also submit a post-hydrofracture report in a form and manner as prescribed by the Commission.

(5) The project sponsor shall comply with the mitigation requirements set forth in § 806.22(b).

(6) Any flowback or production fluids utilized by the project sponsor for hydrofracture stimulation undertaken at the project shall be separately accounted for, but shall not be included in the daily consumptive use amount calculated for the project, or be subject to the mitigation requirements of § 806.22(b).

(7) The project sponsor shall obtain all necessary permits or approvals required for the project from other federal, state, or local government agencies having jurisdiction over the project. The Executive Director reserves the right to modify, suspend or revoke any approval under this paragraph (f) if the project sponsor fails to obtain or maintain such approvals.

(8) The project sponsor shall certify to the Commission that all flowback and production fluids have been re-used or treated and disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

(9) The Executive Director may grant, deny, suspend, revoke, modify or condition an approval to operate under this approval by rule, or renew an existing approval by rule granted hereunder, and will notify the project sponsor of such determination, including the sources and quantity of consumptive use approved. The issuance of any approval hereunder shall not be construed to waive or exempt the project sponsor from obtaining Commission approval for any water withdrawals or diversions subject to review pursuant to § 806.4(a). Any sources of water approved pursuant to this section shall be further subject to any approval or authorization required by the member jurisdiction.

(10) Approval by rule shall be effective upon written notification from the Executive Director to the project sponsor, shall expire five years from the date of such notification, and supersede any previous consumptive use approvals to the extent applicable to the project.

(11) In addition to water sources approved for use by the project sponsor pursuant to § 806.4 or this section, for unconventional natural gas development or hydrocarbon development, whichever is applicable, a project sponsor issued an approval by rule pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section may utilize any of the following water sources at the drilling pad site, subject to such monitoring and reporting requirements as the Commission may prescribe:

(i) Tophole water encountered during the drilling process, provided it is used only for drilling or hydrofracture stimulation.

(ii) Precipitation or stormwater collected on the drilling pad site, provided it is used only for drilling or hydrofracture stimulation.

(iii) Drilling fluids, formation fluids, flowback or production fluids obtained from a drilling pad site, production well site or hydrocarbon water storage facility, provided it is used only for hydrofracture stimulation, and is

handled, transported and stored in compliance with all standards and requirements of the applicable member jurisdiction.

(iv) Water obtained from a hydrocarbon water storage facility associated with an approval issued by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4(a) or by the Executive Director pursuant to this section, provided it is used only for the purposes authorized therein, and in compliance with all standards and requirements of the applicable member jurisdiction.

(12) A project sponsor issued an approval by rule pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section may utilize a source of water approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4(a), or by the Executive Director pursuant to paragraph (f)(14) of this section, and issued to persons other than the project sponsor, provided any such source is approved for use in unconventional natural gas development, or hydrocarbon development, whichever is applicable, the project sponsor has an agreement for its use, and at least 10 days prior to use, the project sponsor registers such source with the Commission on a form and in the manner prescribed by the Commission.

(13) A project sponsor issued an approval by rule pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section may also utilize other sources of water, including but not limited to, public water supply or wastewater discharge not otherwise associated with an approval issued by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4(a) or an approval by rule issued pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section, provided such sources are first approved by the Executive Director. Any request for approval shall be submitted on a form and in the manner prescribed by the Commission, shall satisfy the notice requirements set forth in § 806.15, and shall be subject to review pursuant to the standards set forth in subpart C of this part.

(14) A project sponsor issued an approval by rule pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section may utilize water obtained from a hydrocarbon water storage facility that is not otherwise associated with an approval issued by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4(a), or an approval by rule issued pursuant to paragraph (f)(9) of this section, provided such sources are first approved by the Executive Director and are constructed and maintained in compliance with all standards and requirements of the applicable member jurisdiction. The owner or operator of any such facility shall submit a request for approval on a form and in the manner prescribed by the Commission,

shall satisfy the notice requirements set forth in § 806.15, and shall be subject to review pursuant to the standards set forth in subpart C of this part.

(15) The project sponsor shall provide a copy of any registration or source approval issued pursuant to this section to the appropriate agency of the applicable member jurisdiction. The project sponsor shall record on a daily basis, and report quarterly on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Commission, the quantity of water obtained from any source registered or approved hereunder. Any source approval issued hereunder shall also be subject to such monitoring and reporting requirements as may be contained in such approval or otherwise required by this part.

■ 11. Amend § 806.23 by revising paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3)(i) and adding paragraph (b)(5) to read as follows:

§ 806.23 Standards for water withdrawals.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(2) The Commission may deny an application, limit or condition an approval to ensure that the withdrawal will not cause significant adverse impacts to the water resources of the basin. The Commission may consider, without limitation, the following in its consideration of adverse impacts: Lowering of groundwater or stream flow levels; groundwater and surface water availability, including cumulative uses; rendering competing supplies unreliable; affecting other water uses; causing water quality degradation that may be injurious to any existing or potential water use; affecting fish, wildlife or other living resources or their habitat; causing permanent loss of aquifer storage capacity; affecting wetlands; or affecting low flow of perennial or intermittent streams.

(3) * * *

(i) Limit the quantity, timing or rate of withdrawal or level of drawdown, including requiring a total system limit.

* * * * *

(5) For projects consisting of mine dewatering, water resources remediation, and gravity-drained AMD facilities, review of adverse impacts will have limited consideration of groundwater availability, causing permanent loss of aquifer storage and lowering of groundwater levels provided these projects are operated in accordance with the laws and regulations of the member jurisdictions.

■ 12. Amend § 806.30 by revising the introductory text and revising paragraph (a)(4) and adding paragraph (a)(8) to read as follows:

§ 806.30 Monitoring.

The Commission, as part of the project review, shall evaluate the proposed methodology for monitoring consumptive uses, water withdrawals and mitigating flows, including flow metering devices, stream gages, and other facilities used to measure the withdrawals or consumptive use of the project or the rate of stream flow. If the Commission determines that additional flow measuring, metering or monitoring devices are required, these shall be provided at the expense of the project sponsor, installed in accordance with a schedule set by the Commission, and installed per the specifications and recommendations of the manufacturer of the device, and shall be subject to inspection by the Commission at any time.

(a) * * *

(4) Measure groundwater levels in all approved production and other wells, as specified by the Commission.

* * * * *

(8) Perform other monitoring for impacts to water quantity, water quality and aquatic biological communities, as specified by the Commission.

* * * * *

■ 13. Amend § 806.31 by revising paragraphs (d) and (e) to read as follows:

§ 806.31 Term of approvals.

* * * * *

(d) If the Commission determines that a project has been abandoned, by evidence of nonuse for a period of time and under such circumstances that an abandonment may be inferred, the Commission may revoke the approval for such withdrawal, diversion or consumptive use.

(e) If a project sponsor submits an application to the Commission no later than six months prior to the expiration of its existing Commission docket approval or no later than one month prior to the expiration of its existing ABR or NOI approval, the existing approval will be deemed extended until such time as the Commission renders a decision on the application, unless the existing approval or a notification in writing from the Commission provides otherwise.

■ 14. Add subpart E to read as follows:

Subpart E—Registration of Grandfathered Projects

Sec.

806.40 Applicability.

806.41 Registration and eligibility.

806.42 Registration requirements.

806.43 Metering and monitoring requirements.

806.44 Determination of grandfathered quantities.

806.45 Appeal of determination.

§ 806.40 Applicability.

(a) This subpart is applicable to the following projects, which shall be known as grandfathered projects:

(1) The project has an associated average consumptive use of 20,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day period all or part of which is a pre-compact consumptive use that has not been approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4.

(2) The project has an associated groundwater withdrawal average of 100,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day period all or part of which was initiated prior to July 13, 1978, that has not been approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4.

(3) The project has an associated surface water withdrawal average of 100,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day period all or part of which was initiated prior to November 11, 1995, that has not been approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4.

(4) The project (or an element of the project) has been approved by the Commission but has an associated consumptive use or water withdrawal that has not been approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4.

(5) Any project not included in paragraphs (a)(2) through (4) of this section that has a total withdrawal average of 100,000 gpd or more in any consecutive 30-day average from any combination of sources which was initiated prior to January 1, 2007, that has not been approved by the Commission pursuant to § 806.4.

(6) Any source associated with a project included in paragraphs (a)(2) through (5) of this section regardless of quantity.

(b) A project, including any source of the project, that can be determined to have been required to seek Commission review and approval under the pertinent regulations in place at the time is not eligible for registration as a grandfathered project.

§ 806.41 Registration and eligibility.

(a) Projects sponsors of grandfathered projects identified in § 806.40 shall submit a registration to the Commission, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Commission, within two years of the effective date of this regulation.

(b) Any grandfathered project that fails to register under paragraph (a) of this section shall be subject to Commission's review and approval under § 806.4.

(c) Any project that is not eligible to register under paragraph (a) of this section shall be subject to Commission's review and approval under § 806.4.

(d) The Commission may establish fees for obtaining and maintaining registration in accordance with § 806.35.

(e) A registration under this subpart may be transferred pursuant to § 806.6.

§ 806.42 Registration requirements.

(a) Registrations shall include the following information:

(1) Identification of project sponsor including any and all proprietors, corporate officers or partners, the mailing address of the same, and the name of the individual authorized to act for the sponsor.

(2) Description of the project and site in terms of:

(i) Project location, including latitude and longitude coordinates in decimal degrees accurate to within 10 meters.

(ii) Project purpose.

(3) Identification of all sources of water, including the date the source was put into service, each source location (including latitude and longitude coordinates in decimal degrees accurate to within 10 meters), and if applicable, any approved docket numbers.

(4) Identification of current metering and monitoring methods for water withdrawal and consumptive use.

(5) Identification of current groundwater level or elevation monitoring methods at groundwater sources.

(6) All quantity data for water withdrawals and consumptive use for a minimum of the previous five calendar years. If quantity data are not available, any information available upon which a determination of quantity could be made.

(7) For consumptive use, description of processes that use water, identification of water returned to the Basin, history of the use, including process changes, expansions and other actions that would have an impact on the amount of water consumptively used during the past five calendar years.

(8) Based on the data provided, the quantity of withdrawal for each individual source and consumptive use the project sponsor requests to be grandfathered by the Commission.

(9) Any ownership or name changes to the project since January 1, 2007.

(b) The Commission may require any other information it deems necessary for the registration process.

§ 806.43 Metering and monitoring requirements.

(a) As a part of the registration process, the Commission shall review the current metering and monitoring for grandfathered withdrawals and consumptive uses.

(b) The Commission may require a metering and monitoring plan for the project sponsor to follow.

(c) Project sponsors, as an ongoing obligation of their registration, shall report to the Commission all information specified in the grandfathering determination under § 806.44 in a form and manner determined by the Commission. If quantity reporting is required by the member jurisdiction where the project is located, the Commission may accept that reported quantity to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

§ 806.44 Determination of grandfathered quantities.

(a) For each registration submitted, the Executive Director shall determine the grandfathered quantity for each withdrawal source and consumptive use.

(b) In making a determination, the following factors should be considered:

(1) The most recent withdrawal and use data;

(2) The reliability and accuracy of the data and/or the meters or measuring devices;

(3) Determination of reasonable and genuine usage of the project, including any anomalies in the usage; and

(4) Other relevant factors.

§ 806.45 Appeal of determination.

(a) A final determination of the grandfathered quantity by the Executive Director must be appealed to the Commission within 30 days from actual notice of the determination.

(b) The Commission shall appoint a hearing officer to preside over appeals under this section. Hearings shall be governed by the procedures set forth in part 808 of this chapter.

PART 808—HEARINGS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

■ 15. The authority citation for part 808 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Secs. 3.4, 3.5(5), 3.8, 3.10 and 15.2, Pub. L. 91–575, 84 Stat. 1509 *et seq.*

■ 16. Revise § 808.1 to read as follows:

§ 808.1 Public hearings.

(a) A public hearing shall be conducted in the following instances:

(1) Addition of projects or adoption of amendments to the comprehensive plan, except as otherwise provided by section 14.1 of the compact.

(2) Review and approval of diversions.

(3) Imposition or modification of rates and charges.

(4) Determination of protected areas.

(5) Drought emergency declarations.

(6) Hearing requested by a member jurisdiction.

(7) As otherwise required by sections 3.5(4), 4.4, 5.2(e), 6.2(a), 8.4, and 10.4 of the compact.

(b) A public hearing may be conducted by the Commission or the Executive Director in any form or style chosen by the Commission or Executive Director in the following instances:

(1) Proposed rulemaking.

(2) Consideration of projects, except projects approved pursuant to memoranda of understanding with member jurisdictions.

(3) Adoption of policies and technical guidance documents.

(4) Identification of a water critical area.

(5) When it is determined that a hearing is necessary to give adequate consideration to issues related to public health, safety and welfare, or protection of the environment, or to gather additional information for the record or consider new information on a matter before the Commission.

(c) *Notice of public hearing.* At least 20 days before any public hearing required by the compact, notices stating the date, time, place and purpose of the hearing including issues of interest to the Commission shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected. In all other cases, at least 20 days prior to the hearing, notice shall be posted on the Commission Web site, sent to the parties who, to the Commission's knowledge, will participate in the hearing, and sent to persons, organizations and news media who have made requests to the Commission for notices of hearings or of a particular hearing. With regard to rulemaking, hearing notices need only be forwarded to the directors of the New York Register, the Pennsylvania Bulletin, the Maryland Register and the **Federal Register**, and it is sufficient that this notice appear in the **Federal Register** at least 20 days prior to the hearing and in each individual state publication at least 10 days prior to any hearing scheduled in that state.

(d) *Standard public hearing procedure.* (1) Hearings shall be open to the public. Participants may be any person, including a project sponsor, wishing to appear at the hearing and make an oral or written statement. Statements shall be made a part of the record of the hearing, and written statements may be received up to and including the last day on which the hearing is held, or within 10 days or a reasonable time thereafter as may be specified by the presiding officer.

(2) Participants are encouraged to file with the Commission at its headquarters

written notice of their intention to appear at the hearing. The notice should be filed at least three days prior to the opening of the hearing.

(e) *Representative capacity.*

Participants wishing to be heard at a public hearing may appear in person or be represented by an attorney or other representative. A governmental authority may be represented by one of its officers, employees or by a designee of the governmental authority.

(f) *Description of project.* When notice of a public hearing is issued, there shall be available for inspection, consistent with the Commission's Access to Records Policy, all plans, summaries, maps, statements, orders or other supporting documents which explain, detail, amplify, or otherwise describe the project the Commission is considering. Instructions on where and how the documents may be obtained will be included in the notice.

(g) *Presiding officer.* A public hearing shall be presided over by the Commission chair, the Executive Director, or any member or designee of the Commission or Executive Director. The presiding officer shall have full authority to control the conduct of the hearing and make a record of the same.

(h) *Transcript.* Whenever a project involving a diversion of water is the subject of a public hearing, and at all other times deemed necessary by the Commission or the Executive Director, a written transcript of the hearing shall be made. A certified copy of the transcript and exhibits shall be available for review during business hours at the Commission's headquarters to anyone wishing to examine them. Persons wishing to obtain a copy of the transcript of any hearing shall make arrangements to obtain it directly from the recording stenographer at their expense.

(i) The Commission may conduct any public hearings in concert with any other agency of a member jurisdiction.

■ 17. Revise § 808.2 to read as follows:

§ 808.2 Administrative appeals.

(a) A project sponsor or other person aggrieved by a final action or decision of the Executive Director shall file a written appeal with the Commission within 30 days of the receipt of actual notice by the project sponsor or within 30 days of publication of the action on the Commission's Web site or in the **Federal Register**. Appeals shall be filed on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Commission and the petitioner shall have 20 days from the date of filing to amend the appeal. The following is a non-exclusive list of actions by the Executive Director that

are subject to an appeal to the Commission:

(1) A determination that a project requires review and approval under § 806.5 of this chapter;

(2) An approval or denial of an application for transfer under § 806.6 of this chapter;

(3) An approval of a Notice of Intent under a general permit under § 806.17 of this chapter.

(4) An approval of a minor modification under § 806.18 of this chapter; and

(5) A determination regarding an approval by rule under § 806.22(e) or (f) of this chapter;

(6) A determination regarding an emergency certificate under § 806.34 of this chapter;

(7) Enforcement orders issued under § 808.14;

(8) A finding regarding a civil penalty under § 808.15(c);

(9) A determination of grandfathered quantity under § 806.44 of this chapter;

(10) A decision to modify, suspend or revoke a previously granted approval;

(11) A records access determination made pursuant to Commission policy;

(b) The appeal shall identify the specific action or decision being appealed, the date of the action or decision, the interest of the person requesting the hearing in the subject matter of the appeal, and a statement setting forth the basis for objecting to or seeking review of the action or decision.

(c) Any request not filed on or before the applicable deadline established in paragraph (a) of this section hereof will be deemed untimely and such request for a hearing shall be considered denied unless the Commission, upon written request and for good cause shown, grants leave to make such filing nunc pro tunc; the standard applicable to what constitutes good cause shown being the standard applicable in analogous cases under Federal law. Receipt of requests for hearings pursuant to this section, whether timely filed or not, shall be submitted by the Executive Director to the commissioners for their information.

(d) Petitioners shall be limited to a single filing that shall set forth all matters and arguments in support thereof, including any ancillary motions or requests for relief. Issues not raised in this single filing shall be considered waived for purposes of the instant proceeding. Where the petitioner is appealing a final determination on a project application and is not the project sponsor, the petitioner shall serve a copy of the appeal upon the project sponsor within five days of its filing.

(e) The Commission will determine the manner in which it will hear the appeal. If a hearing is granted, the Commission shall serve notice thereof upon the petitioner and project sponsor and shall publish such notice in the **Federal Register**. The hearing shall not be held less than 20 days after publication of such notice. Hearings may be conducted by one or more members of the Commission, or by such other hearing officer as the Commission may designate.

(1) The petitioner may also request a stay of the action or decision giving rise to the appeal pending final disposition of the appeal, which stay may be granted or denied by the Executive Director after consultation with the Commission chair and the member from the affected member State. The decision of the Executive Director on the request for stay shall not be appealable to the Commission under this section and shall remain in full force and effect until the Commission acts on the appeal.

(2) In addition to the contents of the request itself, the Executive Director, in granting or denying the request for stay, will consider the following factors:

(i) Irreparable harm to the petitioner.

(ii) The likelihood that the petitioner will prevail.

(f) The Commission shall grant the hearing request pursuant to this section if it determines that an adequate record with regard to the action or decision is not available, or that the Commission has found that an administrative review is necessary or desirable. If the Commission denies any request for a hearing, the party seeking such hearing shall be limited to such remedies as may be provided by the compact or other applicable law or court rule. If a hearing is granted, the Commission shall refer the matter for hearing to be held in accordance with § 808.3, and appoint a hearing officer.

(g) If a hearing is not granted, the Commission may set a briefing schedule and decide the appeal based on the record before it. The Commission may, in its discretion, schedule and hear oral argument on an appeal.

(h) *Intervention.* (1) A request for intervention may be filed with the Commission by persons other than the petitioner within 20 days of the publication of a notice of the granting of such hearing in the **Federal Register**. The request for intervention shall state the interest of the person filing such notice, and the specific grounds of objection to the action or decision or other grounds for appearance. The hearing officer(s) shall determine whether the person requesting intervention has standing in the matter

that would justify their admission as an intervenor to the proceedings in accordance with Federal case law.

(2) Interveners shall have the right to be represented by counsel, to present evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(i) Where a request for an appeal is made, the 90-day appeal period set forth in section 3.10(6) and Federal reservation (o) of the compact shall not commence until the Commission has either denied the request for or taken final action on an administrative appeal.

■ 18. Revise § 808.11 to read as follows:

§ 808.11 Duty to comply.

It shall be the duty of any person to comply with any provision of the compact, or the Commission's rules, regulations, orders, approvals, docket conditions, staff directives or any other requirement of the Commission.

■ 19. Revise § 808.14 to read as follows:

§ 808.14 Orders.

(a) Whether or not an NOV has been issued, the Executive Director may issue an order directing an alleged violator to cease and desist any action or activity to the extent such action or activity constitutes an alleged violation, or may issue any other order related to the prevention of further violations, or the abatement or remediation of harm caused by the action or activity.

(b) If the project sponsor fails to comply with any term or condition of a docket or other approval, the commissioners or Executive Director may issue an order suspending, modifying or revoking approval of the docket. The commissioners may also, in their discretion, suspend, modify or revoke a docket approval if the project sponsor fails to obtain or maintain other federal, state or local approvals.

(c) The commissioners or Executive Director may issue such other orders as may be necessary to enforce any provision of the compact, the Commission's rules or regulations, orders, approvals, docket conditions, or any other requirements of the Commission.

(d) It shall be the duty of any person to proceed diligently to comply with any order issued pursuant to this section.

(e) The Commission or Executive Director may enter into a Consent Order and Agreement with an alleged violator to resolve non-compliant operations and enforcement proceedings in conjunction with or separately from settlement agreements under § 808.18.

■ 20. Revise § 808.15 to read as follows:

§ 808.15 Show cause proceeding.

(a) The Executive Director may issue an order requiring an alleged violator to show cause why a penalty should not be assessed in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and section 15.17 of the compact. The order to the alleged violator shall:

(1) Specify the nature and duration of violation(s) that is alleged to have occurred.

(2) Set forth the date by which the alleged violator must provide a written response to the order.

(3) Identify the civil penalty recommended by Commission staff.

(b) The written response by the project sponsor should include the following:

(1) A statement whether the project sponsor contests that the violations outlined in the Order occurred;

(2) If the project sponsor contests the violations, then a statement of the relevant facts and/or law providing the basis for the project sponsor's position;

(3) Any mitigating factors or explanation regarding the violations outlined in the Order;

(4) A statement explaining what the appropriate civil penalty, if any, should be utilizing the factors at § 808.16.

(c) Based on the information presented and any relevant policies, guidelines or law, the Executive Director shall make a written finding affirming or modifying the civil penalty recommended by Commission staff.

■ 21. Amend § 808.16 by revising paragraph (a) introductory text and paragraph (a)(7), adding paragraph (a)(8), and revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 808.16 Civil penalty criteria.

(a) In determining the amount of any civil penalty or any settlement of a violation, the Commission and Executive Director shall consider:

* * * * *

(7) The length of time over which the violation occurred and the amount of water used, diverted or withdrawn during that time period.

(8) The punitive effect of a civil penalty.

(b) The Commission and/or Executive Director retains the right to waive any penalty or reduce the amount of the penalty recommended by the Commission staff under § 808.15(a)(3) should it be determined, after consideration of the factors in paragraph (a) of this section, that extenuating circumstances justify such action.

■ 22. Revise § 808.17 to read as follows:

§ 808.17 Enforcement of penalties, abatement or remedial orders.

Any penalty imposed or abatement or remedial action ordered by the Commission or the Executive Director shall be paid or completed within such time period as shall be specified in the civil penalty assessment or order. The Executive Director and Commission counsel are authorized to take such additional action as may be necessary to assure compliance with this subpart. If a proceeding before a court becomes necessary, the penalty amount determined in accordance with this part shall constitute the penalty amount recommended by the Commission to be fixed by the court pursuant to section 15.17 of the compact.

■ 23. Revise § 808.18 to read as follows:

§ 808.18 Settlement by agreement.

(a) An alleged violator may offer to settle an enforcement action by agreement. The Executive Director may enter into settlement agreements to resolve an enforcement action. The Commission may, by Resolution, require certain types of enforcement actions or settlements to be submitted to the Commission for action or approval.

(b) In the event the violator fails to carry out any of the terms of the settlement agreement, the Commission or Executive Director may reinstitute a civil penalty action and any other applicable enforcement action against the alleged violator.

Dated: September 15, 2016.

Stephanie L. Richardson,
Secretary to the Commission.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Part 90

[PS Docket No. 16-269, FCC 16-117]

Procedures for Commission Review of State Opt-Out Requests From the FirstNet Radio Access Network

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: In this document the Commission opens a new proceeding relating to the National Public Safety Broadband Network being implemented by the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). The proceeding seeks comment on proposed procedures for administering the Commission's role in the State opt-out process from the