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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC

Docket No. PF12-15-000

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PLANNED
VIRGINIA SOUTHSIDE EXPANSION PROJECT,
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES,
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Virginia Southside Expansion Project (Project) involving construction and operation of facilities by Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company, LLC (Transco) in Pittsylvania, Halifax, Charlotte, Mecklenburg, and Brunswick Counties, Virginia. The Commission will use this EA in its decision-making process to determine whether the Project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the Project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. Please note that the **scoping period will close on October 1, 2012.**

You may submit comments in written form or verbally. Further details on how to submit written comments are in the Public Participation section of this notice. In lieu of or in addition to sending written comments, the Commission invites you to attend the FERC public scoping meetings scheduled for the Project as follows:

Tuesday
September 18, 2012
Beginning at 6:30 PM
Brian's Restaurant
(upstairs room)
625 East Atlantic Ave
South Hill, VA 23970

Wednesday
September 19, 2012
Beginning at 6:30 PM
Fairfield Inn & Suites
Conference Suite
1120 Bill Tuck Highway
South Boston, VA 24592

Thursday
September 20, 2012
Beginning at 6:30 PM
Olde Dominion Agricultural
Conference Center
19783 US Hwy 29 S, Suite G
Chatham, VA 24531

The public meetings are designed to provide you with more detailed information and another opportunity to offer your comments on the planned project. Transco representatives will be present one hour before each meeting to describe their proposal, present maps, and answer questions. Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to attend the meetings and to present comments on the issues they believe should be addressed in the EA. A transcript of each meeting will be made so that your comments will be accurately recorded.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this Project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this planned Project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern. If you are a landowner receiving this notice, a pipeline company representative may contact you about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the planned facilities. The company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if the Commission approves the Project, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings where compensation would be determined in accordance with state law.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" is available for viewing on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov). This fact sheet addresses a number of typically-asked questions, including the use of eminent domain and how to participate in the Commission's proceedings.

Summary of the Planned Project

Transco plans to expand its existing South Virginia Lateral by constructing 98.6 miles of new 24-inch-diameter pipeline to provide additional natural gas transportation to markets in southern Virginia and northern North Carolina. The planned Project would provide an additional 250,000 dekatherms per day (dt/day) of natural gas transportation capability from Transco's pooling point¹ in Mercer County, New Jersey to its interconnection with East Tennessee Natural Gas Pipeline in Rockingham County, North Carolina. It would also transport natural gas to the Virginia Electric and Power Company's proposed 1,300-megawatt power station in Brunswick County, Virginia.

¹ Aggregation of gas from several natural gas supply points to a single point where gas can be sent to market.

The Project would include construction and operation of the following facilities:

- approximately 91.4 miles of new 24-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline collocated with the existing South Virginia Lateral in Pittsylvania, Halifax, Charlotte, Mecklenburg, and Brunswick Counties, Virginia;
- approximately 7.2 miles of new 24-inch-diameter greenfield natural gas pipeline located in Brunswick County, Virginia;
- one new compressor station in Pittsylvania County, Virginia;
- line heaters at the terminus of the Brunswick Lateral;
- modifications to valves and meter stations at 12 facilities along the existing South Virginia Lateral;
- modifications to existing Compressor Station 205 to allow bi-directional flow on Transco's mainline in Mercer County, New Jersey; and
- other appurtenant and ancillary facilities.

The general location of the Project facilities is shown in Appendix 1.²

Transco plans to initiate construction of the Project in the third quarter of 2014 and complete construction during the third quarter of 2015. The construction schedule would be driven by the need to complete construction of the Project by the planned time for initial operation of the Virginia Electric and Power Company proposed 1,300-megawatt power station, which is not under the jurisdiction of the FERC.

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the planned facilities would disturb about 2,040 acres of land for the pipeline and aboveground facilities. Following construction, Transco would maintain about 140 acres for permanent operation of the Project's facilities; the remaining acreage would be restored and revert to former uses. Over 90 percent of the proposed new pipeline would be collocated with the existing South Virginia Lateral, maximizing the use of previously disturbed right-of-way to the extent practicable.

² The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the Federal Register. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at www.ferc.gov using the link called "eLibrary" or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us³ to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as “scoping”. The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. We will consider all filed comments during the preparation of the EA.

In the EA we will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the planned Project under these general headings:

- geology and soils;
- water resources;
- wetlands and vegetation;
- fish and wildlife;
- threatened and endangered species;
- land use, recreation, and visual resources;
- air quality and noise;
- cultural resources;
- socioeconomics;
- reliability and safety; and
- cumulative environmental impacts.

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the planned Project or portions of the Project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Although no formal application has been filed, we have already initiated our NEPA review under the Commission’s pre-filing process. The purpose of the pre-filing process is to encourage early involvement of interested stakeholders and to identify and resolve issues before the FERC receives an application. As part of our pre-filing review, we have begun to contact federal and state agencies to discuss their involvement in the scoping process and the preparation of the EA.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be presented in the EA. The EA will be placed in the public record and, depending on the comments received during the

³ “We,” “us,” and “our” refer to the environmental staff of the Commission’s Office of Energy Projects.

scoping process, may be published and distributed to the public. A comment period will be allotted if the EA is published for review. We will consider all comments on the EA before we make our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure your comments are considered, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section beginning on page 6.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues related to this Project to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA.⁴ Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice. Currently the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk and Wilmington Districts have expressed their intention to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EA to satisfy their NEPA responsibilities related to this Project.

Consultations Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are using this notice to initiate consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the Project's potential effects on historic properties.⁵ We will define the Project-specific Area of Potential Effect in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) as the Project develops. On natural gas facility projects, the Area of Potential Effect at a minimum encompasses all areas subject to ground disturbance (examples include the construction right-of-way, contractor/pipe storage yards, compressor stations, and access roads). Our EA for this Project will document our findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

⁴ The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.6.

⁵ The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the planned facilities and the environmental information provided by Transco. This preliminary list of issues may change based on your comments and our analysis:

- potential impacts on perennial and intermittent waterbodies, including waterbodies with federal and/or state designations/protections;
- evaluation of temporary and permanent impacts on wetlands and the development of appropriate mitigation;
- potential impacts to fish and wildlife habitat, including potential impacts to federally and state-listed threatened and endangered species;
- potential effects on prime farmland and erodible soils;
- potential visual effects of the aboveground facilities on surrounding areas;
- potential impacts and potential benefits of construction workforce on local housing, infrastructure, public services, and economy; and
- impacts on air quality and noise associated with construction and operation of the Project.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the Project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please send your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC on or before **October 1, 2012**. This is not your only public input opportunity; please refer to the Environmental Review Process flow chart in Appendix 2.

For your convenience, there are three methods you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. In all instances, please reference the Project docket number (PF12-15-000) with your submission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has expert staff available to assist you at (202) 502-8258 or efiling@ferc.gov.

- (1) You can file your comments electronically using the [eComment](#) feature located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). This is an easy method for interested persons to submit brief, text-only comments on a project;

- (2) You can file your comments electronically using the [eFiling](#) feature located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on "[eRegister](#)." You must select the type of filing you are making. If you are filing a comment on a particular project, please select "Comment on a Filing"; or
- (3) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the following address:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Environmental Mailing List

The environmental mailing list includes federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission's regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, whose property may be used temporarily for Project purposes, or who own homes within certain distances of aboveground facilities, and anyone who submits comments on the Project. We will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that we send the information related to this environmental review to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the planned Project.

Copies of the completed EA will be sent to the environmental mailing list for public review and comment. **If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the document instead of the CD version or would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please return the attached Information Request (Appendix 3).**

Becoming an Intervenor

Once Transco files its application with the Commission, you may want to become an "intervenor," which is an official party to the Commission's proceeding. Intervenor play a more formal role in the process and are able to file briefs, appear at hearings, and be heard by the courts if they choose to appeal the Commission's final ruling. An intervenor formally participates in the proceeding by filing a request to intervene. Instructions for becoming an intervenor are in the User's Guide under the "e-filing" link on the Commission's website. Please note that the Commission will not accept requests

for intervenor status at this time. You must wait until the Commission receives a formal application for the Project.

Additional Information

Additional information about the Project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at **(866) 208-FERC**, or on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov) using the eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on "General Search" and enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field (i.e., PF12-15). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm.

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx along with other related information.

Dated: August 30, 2012

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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