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Comment Date: 5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 23, 2012.

Dated: July 5, 2012.

Kimberly D. Bose,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2012-16996 Filed 7-11-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP12-471-000]

Northwest Pipeline GP; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed South Seattle Delivery Lateral 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 South Seattle Delivery Lateral Expansion Project involving construction and operation of facilities by Northwest Pipeline GP (Northwest) in King County, Washington. 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 August 6, 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 public scoping meeting scheduled as follows:

FERC Public Scoping Meeting, South Seattle Delivery Lateral Expansion Project, July 30, 2012 at 7:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn Seattle/Renton, 1801 East Valley Road, Renton, WA 98057.

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 proposed 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 proposed 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.

Northwest provided landowners with a fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility on My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" 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. It is also available for viewing on the FERC Web site (www.ferc.gov).

Summary of the Proposed Project

Northwest proposes to upgrade 4.0 miles of natural gas pipeline from 10- to 16-inch-diameter in King County, Washington. Northwest proposes to remove the existing 10-inch-diameter segment and replace it with the 16-inch-diameter pipeline in the same ditch. However, at the existing Cedar River crossing it would abandon in place an 800-foot-long segment and install the new pipeline 50 feet offset from the abandoned segment. In addition, Northwest proposes to remove a pig¹ launcher, install two new pig launchers and one pig receiver, and upgrade miscellaneous aboveground facilities. The project would provide about 74,850 dekatherms of natural gas per day to meet demand in the south Seattle market area.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.²

¹ A "pig" is a tool that the pipeline company inserts into and pushes through the pipeline for cleaning the pipeline, conducting internal inspections, or other purposes.

² The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the **Federal Register**. Copies of 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.

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would disturb about 76 acres of land; 96 percent of the disturbed area would be within Northwest's existing right-of-way. Following construction, Northwest would utilize its existing right-of-way for permanent operation of the project's facilities. It would however, need to acquire 4.0 acres of new right-of-way for operation of the aboveground facilities and the pipeline associated with the Cedar River crossing.

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 proposed project under these general headings:

- Geology and soils;
- Land use;
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands;
- Cultural resources;
- Vegetation and wildlife;
- Air quality and noise;
- Endangered and threatened species; and
- Public safety.

We will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

The EA will present our independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in the public record through eLibrary. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, we may also publish and distribute the EA to the public for an allotted comment period. We will consider all comments on the EA before making our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure we have the opportunity to

³ "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Commission's Office of Energy Projects.

consider and address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section beginning on page 5.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues of 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. At this time, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have expressed an interest in participating as cooperating agencies.

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 Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), 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 Effects (APE) in consultation with the SHPO as the project develops. On natural gas facility projects, the APE at a minimum encompasses all areas subject to ground disturbance (examples include 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.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

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

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

⁵ The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's 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 of Historic Places.

- Alternative methods and locations for the crossing of the Cedar River;
- Impacts on threatened and endangered species including Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout; and
- Minimization of impacts on landowners during construction within residential neighborhoods.

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 August 6, 2012.

For your convenience, there are three methods which you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. In all instances please reference the project docket number (CP12-471-000) 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 on the Commission's Web site (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 on the Commission's Web site (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 proposed project.

If we publish and distribute the EA, copies 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 2).

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, 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 Web site.

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 Web site at 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., CP12-471). 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 now 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: July 5, 2012.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2012-16994 Filed 7-11-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP12-480-000]

Merit Energy Company; Notice of Petition for Declaratory Order

Take notice that on June 27, 2012, Merit Energy Company (Merit), under Rule 207(a)(2) of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission) Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.207(a)(2)(2012) filed a Petition for Declaratory Order, requesting the Commission declare that Merit's proposed pipeline, which will consist of one new 4-mile segment and one existing 10-mile segment, is a non-jurisdictional plant inlet pipeline, integrally and solely related to the non-jurisdictional processing activity at the Painter Plant.

Any person desiring to intervene or to protest this filing must file in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211, 385.214). Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Any person wishing to become a party must file a notice of intervention or motion to intervene, as appropriate. Such notices, motions, or protests must be filed on or before the comment date. On or before the comment date, it is not necessary to serve motions to intervene or protests on persons other than the Applicant.

The Commission encourages electronic submission of protests and interventions in lieu of paper using the "eFiling" link at <http://www.ferc.gov>. Persons unable to file electronically should submit an original and 14 copies of the protest or intervention to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission,

888 First Street NE., Washington, DC 20426.

This filing is accessible on-line at <http://www.ferc.gov>, using the "eLibrary" link and is available for review in the Commission's Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. There is an "eSubscription" link on the Web site that enables subscribers to receive email notification when a document is added to a subscribed docket(s). For assistance with any FERC Online service, please email FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, or call (866) 208-3676 (toll free). For TTY, call (202) 502-8659.

Comment Date: 5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 27, 2012.

Dated: July 5, 2012.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. AD12-12-000]

Coordination Between Natural Gas and Electricity Markets; Notice of Technical Conferences

Take notice that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) staff will hold regional technical conferences on Coordination between Natural Gas and Electricity Markets. The regional technical conferences will be held on the following dates and in the following cities:¹

Central²—August 6, 2012, St. Louis, MO

Northeast³—August 20, 2012, Boston, MA

¹ We recognize that due to the long lines of some of the interstate pipelines, natural gas pipeline infrastructure may not neatly fit into these divisions, but find these divisions reasonable for discussing gas-electric coordination issues.

² For purposes of these conferences, the Central region is largely defined by the corporate boundaries of the organized wholesale electric markets of Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator Inc. (MISO), Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (SPP) and Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). While we recognize we do not have Federal Power Act jurisdiction over the rates or terms of service in wholesale electricity markets doing business wholly within the state of Texas in ERCOT events in Texas affect, and are affected by, gas-electric coordination issues in other geographic areas and opening these discussions to all participants will permit a broader and more inclusive examination of all the relevant issues.

³ ISO New England, Inc. (ISO-NE).

Southeast⁴—August 23, 2012,

Washington, DC (FERC HQ)
West⁵—August 28, 2012, Portland, OR
Mid-Atlantic⁶—August 30, 2012,
Washington, DC (FERC HQ)

The regional technical conferences will be open for the public to attend. Commission members will participate in the conferences.

On February 15, 2012, in the above-mentioned docket, a notice was issued requesting comments regarding gas-electric interdependence. The commenters raised a wide variety of issues regarding gas-electric interdependence. Many of the commenters asserted that those issues differed on a regional basis. The regional technical conferences will discuss the various aspects of gas-electric interdependence and coordination, as well as ways to improve communication and coordination between the two industries.

Each conference will be organized as a roundtable discussion of the following topics: (1) Communications/coordination/information sharing; (2) scheduling; (3) market structures and rules; and (4) reliability concerns. Time permitting, comments or questions from those attending the conference, but not participating in the roundtable, will be permitted. Subsequent notices will be issued specifying the time, venue, and agenda for each conference.

Those interested in attending a conference are encouraged to register by close of business, July 19, 2012. You may register at the following Web page: <http://www.ferc.gov/whats-new/registration/nat-gas-elec-mkts-form.asp>. Those also interested in participating in a roundtable should notify the Commission by close of business on the same day by completing an online form identifying at which conference they wish to participate: <http://www.ferc.gov/whats-new/registration/nat-gas-elec-mkts-speaker-form.asp>. Due to time and seating constraints, we may not be able to accommodate all those interested in participating in the roundtables.

Information on the conferences will also be posted on the Web site <http://www.ferc.gov/industries/electric/industry-act/electric-coord.asp>, as well as the Calendar of Events on the Commission's Web site, <http://www.ferc.gov>, prior to the conferences.

Commission conferences are accessible under section 508 of the

⁴ Southern Company, Duke and Progress Energy, TVA, and other areas south of PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. (PJM) and East of SPP and ERCOT.

⁵ The Western Interconnection.

⁶ New York Independent System Operator Inc. (NYISO), PJM and related areas.