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Magalie R. Salas,

Secretary.

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP01-5-003]

#### Algonquin Gas Transmission Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Everett Extension Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues, and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting and Site Visit

March 19, 2003.

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 proposed Everett Extension Project. On February 5, 2003, Algonquin Gas Transmission Company (AGT) filed an application to amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for authorization to construct and operate

facilities in Suffolk County, Massachusetts. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity. A decision whether an environmental impact statement is needed has not been made yet, and will be based on the comments and information received during the scoping process. Agencies listed in Appendix 3 are hereby asked to indicate whether they want to be cooperating agencies for preparing the EA.

The application, and other supplemental filings in this docket are available for viewing on the FERC Internet Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>). Click on the "FERRIS" link, select "General Search" from the FERRIS menu, and follow the instructions, being sure to input the correct docket number (CP01-5-003).

If you are a landowner receiving this notice, you may be contacted by a pipeline company representative about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities. The pipeline company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if the project is approved by the Commission, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain and under certain circumstances the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings in accordance with Florida law.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" was attached to the project notice that AGT provided to landowners. 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 available for viewing on the FERC Internet Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>).

#### Summary of the Proposed Project

AGT would construct 6.64 miles of 24-inch-diameter pipeline, 0.31 miles of 8-inch-diameter pipeline, three meter stations, and appurtenant facilities. The proposal would extend the 24-inch-diameter Deer Island Lateral pipeline (approved on June 4, 2002, in Docket No. CP01-5-002, but unbuilt yet). The proposal would provide 110,000 dekatherms per day of firm transportation service. AGT requests final authorization for the proposed facilities by December 15, 2003, and would construct its facilities in 2004 during the summer and fall, so that it could place the facilities in service by June 1, 2005. The general locations of

the project facilities are shown in Appendix 1.<sup>1</sup> If you are interested in obtaining detailed maps of a specific portion of the project, send in your request using the form in Appendix 4.

#### Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the Everett Extension Project would temporarily disturb a total of about 72.70 acres of land. This includes about 22.9 acres offshore and 36.2 acres onshore for the pipeline construction right-of-way (ROW), and 13.6 acres for extra workspace and contractor staging areas. The total land requirements for the permanent ROW would be about 14.14 acres, including 1.35 acres of land for operation of the new permanent aboveground facilities. The remaining 58.56 acres of land affected by construction would be restored and allowed to revert to its former use.

Approximately 3.86 miles of the pipeline would be built onshore, and 3.09 miles would be offshore. The offshore construction would include about 2.25 miles of horizontal directional drilling, and about 0.84 miles of shallow water dredging. The offshore disturbance would include about 8.67 acres for trench excavation and 14.22 acres for temporarily storing the side-cast trench spoil. AGT states that most (69%) of the proposed onshore route would not require AGT to obtain a ROW easement, since 60% of the route would be located within existing roads or utility ROW, and 9% would be on property owned by proposed customers. AGT would typically use a 50- to 75-foot-wide construction ROW. Temporary extra workspaces are often needed for waterbody, highway, and railroad crossings; additional topsoil storage; and pipe storage and equipment yards.

#### The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us<sup>2</sup> to discover and address concerns the

<sup>1</sup> The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the **Federal Register**. Copies are available on the Commission's Web site at the "FERRIS" link or from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to FERRIS refer to the last page of this notice. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

<sup>2</sup> "We", "us", and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP).