

glycol solution heated with twelve water/glycol boilers during cold weather and a set of intermediate heat exchangers using a secondary circulating water system heated by an air tower during warm weather, and circulation pumps for both systems;

- Two natural gas superheaters and two fuel gas heaters;

- Fire response system, flare, construction dock, utilities, buildings, and service facilities; and

- 9.38 miles of 36-inch-diameter natural gas pipeline extending from the LNG import terminal to a proposed Stratton Ridge Meter Station. The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>2</sup> More detailed maps of the pipeline route are also shown appendix 1.

Freeport is requesting approval such that the terminal and pipeline are completed and placed into service in time to meet natural gas demand during the 2006–2007 winter heating season. Construction of the facilities would take about 3 years.

#### Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed LNG facility would require about 45.7 acres of land for the marine terminal, 140.4 acres for the storage and vaporization area, and 18.6 acres for the LNG transfer line. Construction of the proposed pipeline would disturb about 61.5 acres of land including the construction right-of-way, temporary extra workspaces, and the meter station. The construction right-of-way width for the pipeline would vary from 35 feet in wetland areas to 200 feet at horizontal directional drill sites.

Freeport would maintain a 30-to 50-foot-wide permanent right-of-way for operation of the pipeline. Total land requirements would be approximately 25.6 acres for new permanent right-of-way, 3.8 acres for the new meter station, and 146.4 acres for the LNG facilities.

#### The EIS 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>3</sup> 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 EIS on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EIS. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EIS. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The EIS 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
- Hazardous waste
- Public safety

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

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the EIS. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EIS may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission’s official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the EIS is published. We will consider all comments on the EIS 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.

#### 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

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

- **Geology and Soils:**
  - Assessment of potential site subsidence.
  - Assessment of potentially contaminated dredged material.
  - Impact of an additional 200 ship transits per year on the ongoing erosion of Quintana Island.
- **Water Resources:**
  - Impact on groundwater and water supply wells.
  - Assessment of dredge and fill of coastal wetlands by the construction.
  - Assessment of the use and release of hydrostatic test water.
- **Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation:**
  - Effect on essential fish habitat.
  - Effect on the Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary.
  - Control of noxious weeds within the pipeline right-of-way.
- **Endangered and Threatened Species:**
  - Potential effect on federally listed species.
- **Cultural Resources:**
  - Assessment of cultural resources.
  - Impact on Quintana Cemetery.
  - Native American and tribal concerns.
- **Land Use, Recreation and Special Interest Areas, and Visual Resources:**
  - Permanent land use alteration associated with site development.
  - Impact of the proposed relocation of the Xeriscape Park.
  - Impact on residences, including the potential relocation of a residence.
  - Impact on recreational use of Quintana Beach County Park.
  - Impact on recreational use of Surfside Beach.
  - Evaluation of project’s consistency with coastal zone management area guidelines.
  - Visual impacts associated with new LNG storage tanks.
- **Socioeconomics:**
  - Impact of traffic from 300 construction workers and 17,800 round trips of truck traffic delivering fill material on project site area.
  - Effects of 200 LNG ship transits per year on existing ship traffic in the Port of Freeport.
  - Effects of construction workforce demands on public services and housing.
- **Air Quality and Noise:**
  - Effects on local air quality and noise environment from construction and operation of the proposed facilities.

<sup>2</sup> The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the **Federal Register**. Copies are available from the Commission’s Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, 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>3</sup> “We”, “us”, and “our” refer to the environmental staff of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP).