

Tennessee 37902-1499; telephone (865) 632-6889 or e-mail [hmdraper@tva.gov](mailto:hmdraper@tva.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Background:** On July 26, 2001, ETNG filed an application with FERC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity under the Natural Gas Act for authorization to construct and operate pipeline facilities in Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. The proposed facilities would involve an expansion of ETNG's existing mainline facilities in Tennessee and Virginia and an extension of a new pipeline across southwestern Virginia and north-central North Carolina. Activities related to the mainline expansion would include compressor station construction and modifications, pipeline uprates, pipeline loop construction, and abandonment at numerous locations between Perry County, Tennessee, and Wythe County, Virginia. The Patriot Extension would involve construction of 99.7 miles of new pipeline and associated meter stations and taps in Wythe, Carroll, Floyd, Patrick, Henry, and Pittsylvania Counties in Virginia, and Rockingham County in North Carolina. The Patriot Project would provide natural gas to Duke Energy electricity generation facilities in Murray County, Georgia, and Wythe and Henry Counties, Virginia. In addition, gas would be provided to NUI Energy Brokers, Progress Energy, Public Service Company of North Carolina, and United Cities Gas Company for distribution to residential, commercial, and industrial customers in Virginia and North Carolina. The project would interconnect with the existing Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Corporation (Transco) facility in Rockingham County, North Carolina.

FERC issued a Notice of intent to prepare an EIS for the proposed Patriot Project on October 2, 2001. Meetings to inform local citizens about the project and to identify environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS were held in Stuart, Wytheville, Hillsville, and Martinsville, Virginia, and in Bristol and Chattanooga, Tennessee, in October and November 2001. TVA responded to the notice informing FERC that TVA would likely have a land use approval action related to the project. Because of its land use jurisdiction, TVA was subsequently included as a cooperating agency in the Draft EIS (DEIS). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIS in the **Federal Register** on May 3, 2002. Public meetings to receive comments on the DEIS were held in Martinsville, Stuart, and Hillsville, Virginia, and in Signal Mountain and

Bristol, Tennessee, in May 2002. As a cooperating agency, TVA provided comments on the DEIS. During the DEIS public comment period, ETNG filed an amendment to the Patriot Project to add facilities previously included in a FERC certificate for another TVA project. The TVA project facilities had been previously reviewed by FERC when considering construction of a proposed TVA power plant in Franklin County, Tennessee. FERC completed an Environmental Assessment and issued a certificate for the proposed pipeline loops and other improvements needed for the TVA project on December 21, 2001. TVA completed a Final EIS (FEIS) on the proposed Franklin County Power Plant in August 2001 (EPA published NOA of the FEIS on August 31, 2001), but in 2002, decided not to proceed with construction. ETNG subsequently decided to incorporate certain previously approved facilities into its Patriot Project and to request that the previous certificate be vacated upon approval of the Patriot Project. ETNG also requested a realignment of the pipeline loop in the vicinity of the South Fork Holston River to minimize impacts to the Smith Shoals Subdivision and to provide for a shorter river crossing. This and other route variations were evaluated in more detail prior to completion of the FEIS. After considering comments on the DEIS, FERC published the FEIS in September 2002. EPA published NOA of the Patriot Project FEIS in the **Federal Register** on September 27, 2002. FERC issued its certificate on November 20, 2002, authorizing construction of facilities for the Patriot Project subject to certain conditions to minimize impacts to the environment. FERC denied all requests for rehearing on February 27, 2003.

#### Alternatives Considered

The EIS prepared by FERC considered use of other pipeline systems (System Alternatives), Major Route Alternatives, and Route Variations, in addition to No Action. The most likely System Alternative would involve obtaining gas to meet the project purpose and need from Transco. However, this alternative would involve extensive pipeline construction along routes similar to those required by the Patriot Project. A Mainline Expansion Route Alternative was evaluated in the Signal Mountain area, but was determined to increase impacts to forest land and would not have avoided impacts to nearby residences. The EIS evaluated 13 major route variations that could potentially deliver gas from the existing ETNG system to the area of Eden, North Carolina (Henry County Power, LLC),

and Wytheville (Duke Energy North America Wythe, LLC), Virginia. None of the major route variations offered any environmental advantages over the proposed delivery system, and many of these variations augmented the length of the pipeline, increasing the potential for environmental impacts. The EIS evaluated 8 minor route variations to minimize impacts to specific sensitive resources or nearby residences. Six of these variations were not recommended due to increases in environmental impacts, but two were found to offer environmental advantages. A site variation that offered environmental advantages was the South Fork Holston River variation involving TVA land. Finally, the EIS also evaluated eight site alternatives for aboveground facilities, such as compressor stations. None of these site alternatives were found to offer environmental advantages over the proposed route.

For the proposed crossing of the South Fork Holston River (the action that requires an easement from TVA), FERC and TVA considered a route variation that would require the new loop to follow a slightly longer course than that currently followed by the existing pipeline. Since the route originally proposed would have run parallel to the existing pipeline, there would not be enough space for a drill rig and associated staging area. The route variation would allow additional space by moving the river crossing 2,000 feet downstream of the existing river crossing. The route variation is 0.58 miles longer, would increase the land affected during construction by 7.3 acres, and would increase impacts to forest lands by 3.2 acres as compared to the expansion of the existing route across TVA land. However, the variation, by avoiding the widening of the current pipeline crossing through Smith Shoals Subdivision, would cause lesser traffic and noise impacts to nearby residents. Further, drilling along the original pipeline route would also have involved crossing land managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and could have potentially impacted an archaeological site. Impacts to these sensitive resources would be avoided with the route variation. TVA agrees that the FERC alternatives would achieve the purposes of Sections 101 and 102(1) of NEPA because they seek to minimize impacts to important natural features and public land, while allowing energy resources to be transported to end users.

On November 20, 2002, FERC released an order issuing a certificate for the Patriot Project. The certificate issued by FERC on November 20, 2002,