

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket Nos. CP03–33–000, CP03–34–000 and CP03–35–000]

**Wyckoff Gas Storage Company, LLC;
Notice of Intent To Prepare an
Environmental Assessment for the
Proposed Wyckoff Gas Storage Project
and Request for Comments on
Environmental Issues**

February 10, 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 Wyckoff Gas Storage Project involving construction and operation of facilities by Wyckoff Gas Storage Company, LLC (Wyckoff) in Steuben County, New York.¹ These facilities would consist of about 16.2 miles of various diameter pipeline, 9,470 horsepower (hp) of compression, 9 gas injection/withdrawal wells, and 3 observation wells. 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.

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. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings 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?" was attached to the project notice Wyckoff 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

Wyckoff requests authorization to construct and operate a natural gas

storage facility in two nearly depleted reservoirs in Steuben County, New York, capable of storing up to 6 billion cubic feet of natural gas (CP03–33–000). Wyckoff also requests a blanket certificate under part 157 of the regulations (CP03–34–000) to permit Wyckoff to construct, acquire, and operate additional facilities following construction of the storage facilities; and a blanket certificate under part 284 of the regulations (CP03–35–000) to provide storage services on behalf of others and approval of the filed FERC gas tariff under which Wyckoff would operate to provide open access storage services. Wyckoff's storage facilities would consist of:

- 9,470 horsepower of compression and dehydration facilities at a new compressor station;
- drilling and completion of 6 new injection/withdrawal wells and the re-completion and conversion of 3 existing wells;
- drilling 3 observation wells;
- constructing 3.5 miles of 20-inch-diameter pipeline and bi-directional metering facilities near the intersection of pipelines owned by Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (Tennessee) and Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation (Columbia) in the town of Jasper, New York;
- an interconnection/meter station near the Tennessee and Columbia point of intersection;
- constructing 8 miles of 20-inch-diameter pipeline interconnecting pipeline and metering facilities operated by Dominion Transmission, Inc. (Dominion);
- an interconnection/metering station at the Dominion point of interconnection; and
- constructing 4.7 miles of 6-inch-diameter well lines in the town of Jasper, New York.

There are no nonjurisdictional facilities identified for the project.

The location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.² Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require about 132.3 acres of land. Following construction, about 85.6 acres would be maintained as new permanent right-of-way and aboveground facility sites. The remaining 46.7 acres of land

would be restored and allowed to revert to its former use. The areal extent of the gas storage reservoir is approximately 584 acres.

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 of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. 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 EA 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 wastes
- water resources and wetlands
- 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 EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA 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 EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we make our recommendations to the Commission.

¹ Wyckoff's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

² 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.

³ "We", "us", and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP).