

geology and topography, groundwaters, the Heritage status of the Rio Grande, wetlands, mineral resources, and recreation resources. There will be insignificant, minor or temporary impacts to or on, *inter alia*, noise, surface waters, soils, and protected biological resources. Finally, there will be net benefits to air quality through the elimination of exhaust emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, SO<sub>x</sub>, and particulate matter that are generated when tankers move fuel across the border. Alternative 1, transporting product by tanker truck in the future will continue these emissions. Alternatives 2 and 3, the routing alternatives, are not judged to represent any major difference in impacts to environmental concerns than the preferred route, although by virtue of being 30% longer Alternative 2 (the northern routing) would result in incrementally higher construction-related impacts.

ii. *Transportation and Land Use:* In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, certain crossings will be re-aligned or will be directionally drilled to protect riparian bands that may be used by migratory threatened and endangered species. The Dos Laredos Pipeline does not conflict with existing land use plans for Laredo or Webb County. By utilizing existing fence line and utility line corridors, the pipeline avoids splitting parcels and thereby complicating future development, and minimizes new impacts. Following consultation with local environmental groups, the alignment of the pipeline in the area south and west of FM 1472 was adjusted to minimize impacts to trees adjoining Sombretillo Creek and also to provide (via the maintained right of way) a buffer to keep development away from the creek. When compared with the "no action alternative" of continued truck transport, the pipeline represents a net positive benefit to local transportation by removing additional truck traffic from roadways. There are no major transportation issue related differences in impacts between the preferred routing and the two alternatives evaluated.

iii. *Homeland Security:* Compared to the "no action" alternative, there will be net benefits to homeland security because the pipeline will reduce the truck traffic volume at border crossings. There are no homeland security related differences in impacts between the preferred routing and the two alternatives evaluated.

iv. *Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources:* There is a small increase in the commitment of land resources which are dedicated to

transporting LPG due to the establishment of the new pipeline ROW, as compared to the "no action" alternative. The preferred alignment is advantageous compared to the two alternatives because Alternative 2 would increase the length of the pipeline (and therefore the commitment of land) by approximately 30%, while not changing the land uses which would be affected, and Alternative 3 while not increasing the length of the pipeline, would require adding new restrictions to land use in an already developed light-industrial corridor.

The operation of the pipeline will greatly reduce the energy requirements for transporting LPG from Three Rivers to Nuevo Laredo in comparison with the "no action" alternative. The selection of the preferred alignment will not affect energy requirements for LPG transport to any notable degree when compared with the 2 alternative alignments.

v. *Cumulative Effects:* There are no cumulative impacts to the Nuevo Laredo-Laredo airshed due to consumption of LPG in Mexico, since this supply represents LPG which is already being delivered to Mexico via truck, and the pipeline will only represent a change in delivery system.

A more detailed analysis of each of these factors is provided in the Environmental Assessment, as amended, which addresses issues raised by Federal and state agencies and the public.

#### *B. Impacts Due to Corrosion of the Pipeline or Damage From an Outside Agent*

The Final Environmental Assessment also contains detailed assessment of the potential environmental effects of the Dos Laredos Pipeline arising from pipeline integrity issues. A release of LPG from the pipeline, though improbable, would have very different impacts from those associated with construction and normal operation.

i. *Human Health and Safety Concerns:* Potential human health and safety impacts that may result from a release of hazardous liquids include fire or explosion from LPG, and short-term exposure to hazardous vapors resulting from an LPG release.

The potential risks to human health and safety are most concentrated in areas where the pipeline is close to residences, businesses, or transportation corridors. Only two small portions of the Dos Laredos Pipeline will be located in areas where a pipeline accident could result in risk to nearby residences and businesses: (1) At the northern end where it exits the Valero Laredo Terminal and runs along I-35; and (2)

near the midpoint of the line where it crosses FM 1472 (Mines Road). A large portion of the pipeline is located in areas where no development is likely in the near future.

Any mode of transporting hazardous liquids shares these potential safety impacts. The probability of accidents resulting in fire or explosion for pipelines on a product-mile basis is 35 times lower than that of tanker transport, and the probability of deaths resulting from hazardous liquids transport in pipelines is 87 times lower than transport by tanker trucks on a product-mile basis. For these reasons, the U.S. Department of Transportation considers pipeline transport to be the safest transportation for hazardous liquids.

In addition, as previously discussed, the Dos Laredos Pipeline will traverse fewer areas where impacts to human health and safety are likely to result from a major accident than the "no-action" alternative, and therefore the pipeline will result in substantially lower risks to human health and safety than the "no action" alternative. Alternative 2, the northern alternative routing, would result in a slightly higher risk due to the longer length of pipeline; while Alternative 3, the southern alternative routing, would result in a higher risk because it would pass through already developed industrial corridors for much of the alignment.

This pipeline project has incorporated many safety features to address health and safety concerns. These are presented as mitigation measures.

ii. *Environmental Concerns:* The air quality impacts from an accidental product release from the Dos Laredos Pipeline would be short term and would not constitute a significant impact. Groundwater contamination is unlikely to occur from an LPG leak, because the product immediately expands into a gas upon release. Along most of the alignment, release resulting in fire would cause damage to vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the release, but is unlikely to result in widespread fires because of the types and distribution of vegetation. The mesquite and cactus which dominate the uplands sections of the alignment are difficult to burn even during planned fires, usually requiring mechanical preparation of the site and cessation of grazing to build up sufficient fuel, due to the naturally wide spacing and sparse ground cover. A greater fire hazard is present immediately along the Rio Grande where frequent fires occur in bamboo stands, but the pipeline will be directionally drilled to depths greater than the standard 3-foot minimum cover