

A copy of the EA is available for review at the Commission in the Public Reference Room, or it may be viewed on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number (prefaced by P-) and excluding the last three digits, in the docket number field to access the document. For assistance, call please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at (866) 208-3676 or for TTY (202) 502-8659.

For further information, contact Erich Gaedeke at (202) 502-8777.

Linda Mitry,

Acting Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. PF03-8-000]

Transwestern Pipeline Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for Transwestern's Proposed San Juan 2005 Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

December 24, 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 Transwestern Pipeline Company's (Transwestern) proposed San Juan 2005 Expansion Project in New Mexico. This notice announces the opening of the scoping process we¹ will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help us determine which issues need to be evaluated in the EA. The Commission will use the EA in its decision-making process to determine whether or not to authorize the project. Please note that the scoping period will close on January 26, 2004.

The San Juan 2005 Expansion Project is in the preliminary design stage. At this time no formal application has been filed with the FERC. For this project, the FERC staff is initiating its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review prior to receiving the application. The purpose of the NEPA Pre-filing Process is to involve interested stakeholders early in project

planning and to identify and resolve issues before an application is filed with the FERC. A docket number (PF03-8-000) has been established to place information filed by Transwestern and related documents issued by the Commission, into the public record.² Once a formal application is filed with the FERC, a new docket number will be established.

On November 3-6, 2003, the FERC staff held interagency meetings in Albuquerque, Bloomfield, and Gallup, New Mexico to discuss the project and the environmental review process with Transwestern and other key Federal, tribal, and state agencies. These agencies included: Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife, Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Office, U.S. Bureau of Land Management; Bureau of Indian Affairs, State of New Mexico Environment Department, and the New Mexico State Lands Office. Currently, all agencies above have expressed their intention to participate as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EA.

This notice is being sent to landowners; Federal, state, Navajo Nation, and local government agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American tribes; and local libraries and newspapers. We encourage government representatives to notify their constituents of this planned project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Some affected landowners may be contacted by a project representative about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed facilities. If they are, the company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, in the event that the project is certificated by the Commission, that approval conveys the right of eminent domain for securing easements for the pipeline. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the company could initiate condemnation proceedings in accordance with state law.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Transwestern proposes to expand its natural gas system by the construction of approximately 72.6 miles of pipeline loop³ (the San Juan Lateral Loop) and

modifying facilities at seven existing compressor stations in New Mexico. More specifically, Transwestern requests Commission authorization to:

- Construct and operate approximately 63.2 miles of 36-inch diameter pipeline loop starting at approximate milepost (MP) 8.7 on the existing Transwestern San Juan Lateral, in San Juan County, New Mexico, extending south-southwest to the existing mainline valve (MLV) south of Navajo Highway 9 at about MP 71.9;
- Construct and operate an additional approximately 9.4 miles of 36-inch diameter pipeline loop starting at the existing MLV just south of Pinedale Road in McKinley County, New Mexico (about MP 87.7), and extending south-southwest to terminate at the existing Transwestern Gallup Compressor Station in McKinley County, New Mexico. The Gallup Compressor Station is located at approximate MP 97.1 of the existing San Juan Lateral;
- Bloomfield Compressor Station—Install and operate one, new 15,000 horsepower (HP) electric-drive compressor unit and associated facilities at its existing station, located in San Juan County, New Mexico;
- Bisti Compressor Station—Remove an existing 10,000 HP electric-drive compressor unit and replace it with a new 15,000 HP electric drive compressor unit (de-rated to run at 12,000 HP) at its existing station, located in San Juan County, New Mexico;
- Gallup Compressor Station—Remove an existing compressor unit (compressor only, not the motor) and replace it with a new compressor unit at its existing station in McKinley County, New Mexico;
- Compressor Station 5—Rewheel an existing compressor unit and modify station piping at its existing station located near Thoreau, McKinley County, New Mexico;
- Compressor Station 6—Install cylinder unloaders on an existing compressor unit at its existing station located near Laguna, Cibola County, New Mexico;
- Compressor Station 7—Rewheel an existing compressor unit at its existing station located near Mountainair, Torrance County, New Mexico;
- Compressor Station 9—Rewheel an existing compressor unit and install a new gas scrubber and associated station piping at its existing station located near Roswell, Chaves County, New Mexico;
- Install side valves at new tie-in locations and MLVs at various locations

the amount of gas that can move through that portion of the system.

¹ "We," "us," and "our" refer to the environmental staffs of the FERC's Office of Energy Projects.

² To view information in the docket, follow the instructions for using the eLibrary link at the end of this notice.

³ A pipeline "loop" is a segment of pipe installed adjacent to an existing pipeline and connected to the existing pipeline at both ends. A loop increases