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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP20-53-000]

National Fuel Gas Supply Corporation; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the **Amendment to West Side Expansion and Modernization Project** and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

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 Amendment to West Side Expansion and Modernization Project (Project). The EA will discuss facilities that would be operated by National Fuel Gas Supply Corporation (National Fuel) located in Mercer County, Pennsylvania. The Commission will use this EA in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies about issues regarding the project. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from its action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (Certificate). NEPA also requires the Commission to discover 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, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please submit your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC on or before 5:00pm Eastern Time on April 27, 2020.

You can make a difference by submitting your specific comments or concerns regarding the project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. Commission staff will consider all filed comments during the preparation of the EA.

If you sent comments on this project to the Commission **before** the opening of this docket on February 18, 2020, you will need to file those comments in Docket No. CP20-53-000 to ensure they are considered as part of this proceeding.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this proposed project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

National Fuel provided landowners with a fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled *An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?* 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 also available for viewing on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov) at <https://www.ferc.gov/resources/guides/gas/gas.pdf>.

Public Participation

The Commission offers a free service called eSubscription which makes it easy to stay informed of all issuances and submittals regarding the dockets/projects to which you subscribe. These instant email notifications are the fastest way to receive notification and provide a link to the document files which can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings. To sign up go to www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp.

For your convenience, there are three methods you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has staff available to assist you at (866) 208-3676 or FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov. Please carefully follow these instructions so that your comments are properly recorded.

- 1) You can file your comments electronically using the [eComment](#) feature, which is located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). Using eComment is an easy method for submitting brief, text-only comments on a project;
- 2) You can file your comments electronically by using the [eFiling](#) feature, which is located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on [eRegister](#). You will be asked to select the type of filing you are

- 3) making; a comment on a particular project is considered a Comment on a Filing; or
- 4) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the following address. Be sure to reference the project docket number (CP20-53-000) with your submission: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426

Summary of the Proposed Project

National Fuel is requesting the Certificate for the West Side Expansion Modernization (WSEM) Project issued on March 2, 2015, in Docket No. CP14-70-000 be amended. As part of the West Side Expansion Modernization (WSEM) Project, National Fuel received authorization to designate 1,775 horse power (HP) of compression out of 7,100 HP at the Mercer Compressor Station (CS) as spare compression to ensure National Fuel's ability to meet system pressure requirements and to perform routine and other maintenance when the system is operating at a high load factor. In its Certificate Order, the Commission conditioned the authorization of the “spare” compression stating that “National Fuel cannot, without grant of additional certificate authorization, use any of the spare compression to satisfy intermittent demand for interruptible or secondary firm service or requests for short-term firm service during scheduled maintenance intervals.”

National Fuel is now seeking authorization to remove the spare designation from the 1,775 HP of compression at its Mercer CS to accommodate a subscribing shipper's request to direct a portion of its firm transportation capacity to a different primary delivery point.

The general location of the Mercer CS is shown in appendix 1.¹

Land Requirements for Construction

The reclassification of the Mercer CS spare compression would not require the use of any new lands. No construction would be required and no areas outside the compressor building would be disturbed.

¹ The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the Federal Register. Copies of appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at www.ferc.gov using the link called eLibrary or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

The EA Process

As stated above, the reclassification of the spare HP at the Mercer CS would occur within the existing compressor building and would not involve any land disturbance. The EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project.

Commission staff will also evaluate reasonable 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.

The EA will present Commission staffs' independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in electronic format in the public record through eLibrary² and the Commission's website (<https://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis.asp>). If eSubscribed, you will receive instant email notification when the EA is issued. The EA may be issued for an allotted public comment period. Commission staff will consider all comments on the EA before making recommendations to the Commission. To ensure Commission staff have the opportunity to address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section, beginning on page 2.

With this notice, the Commission is asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues of this project to formally cooperate in the preparation of the EA.³ Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice.

Consultation Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Commission is using this notice to initiate consultation with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office, and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.⁴

² For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

³ The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.6.

⁴The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for

The EA for this project will document findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

Commission staff has not identified any environmental concerns with the proposal at this time but will use your comments to determine if any exist. This will inform our analysis in the EA.

Environmental Mailing List

The environmental mailing list includes federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission's regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, and anyone who submits comments on the project. Commission staff will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that Commission notices related to this environmental review are sent to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the planned project.

If the Commission issues the EA for an allotted public comment period, a *Notice of Availability* of the EA will be sent to the environmental mailing list and will provide instructions to access the electronic document on the FERC's website (www.ferc.gov). **If you need to make changes to your name/address, or if you would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please return the attached "Mailing List Update Form" (appendix 2).**

Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at **(866) 208-FERC**, or on the FERC website at www.ferc.gov using the eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on General Search and enter the docket number in the Docket Number field, excluding the last three digits (i.e., CP20-53). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of all formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Public sessions or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx along with other related information.

Dated: March 26, 2020.

Nathaniel J. Davis, Sr.,
Deputy Secretary.

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