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BEFORE THE
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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IN THE MATTER OF: : Docket Numbers
COLUMBIA GAS TRANSMISSION : PF04-14-000
CORPORATION AND PIEDMONT NATURAL :
GAS HARDY STORAGE PROJECT AND :
COLUMBIA'S VIRGINIA LOOPING PROJECT :
- - - - -x

Quality Inn
Shenandoah Valley
162 W. Old Cross Road
New Market, West Virginia

Thursday, November 18, 2004

The above-entitled matter came on for scoping
meeting, pursuant to notice at 7:10 p.m..

BEFORE: BOB KOPKA, Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (8:10 p.m.)

3 MR. KOPKA: We will go ahead and get start. Can
4 people hear me okay? Yes?

5 (No response.)

6 MR. KOPKA: I would like to welcome everyone here
7 tonight to the scoping meetings on the Columbia Gas
8 Transmission Corporation and Piedmont Natural Gas Hardy
9 Storage Project and Columbia's Virginia Looping Project.

10 My name is Bob Kopka. I work for the Federal
11 Energy Regulatory Commission or FERC. And I am the
12 environmental project manager for these projects.

13 The purpose of tonight's meeting is to get your
14 comments on what issues need to be considered in our
15 environmental assessment or EA for these projects.

16 Because the projects require federal approval
17 from FERC, an environmental review of the project is
18 required under the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA
19 for short. Columbia must also obtain permits from other
20 federal, state and local agencies for these projects as well
21 and we will be incorporating this information into the EA.

22 Danny LaFoon, who is also with FERC staff, is
23 here with me tonight. From CH2MHill we have Dave DaCaro and
24 Christine Metcalf is at the door, who are our third party
25 environmental contractors, who will be assisting FERC with

1 the preparation of the EA for these projects. We also have
2 representatives from Columbia attending the meeting tonight.
3 A lot of the folks there in the back are from Columbia.

4 We will all be available after the scoping
5 meeting to answer additional questions you might have about
6 the projects. Also, the Columbia representatives have
7 brought a map of the storage field that may be helpful to
8 better understand the project. And you can take a look
9 after the scoping portion of the meeting if you haven't
10 already done so.

11 Also tonight, we have a court reporter here to my
12 right. A record is being made of everything that is said
13 here tonight during the official scoping meeting. The
14 transcript will be put on the FERC website. And, if you
15 would like to purchase a copy of the transcript, please see
16 the court reporter after the meeting.

17 I do want to make it clear that we are still
18 early on in the process and that there will be several
19 opportunities to comment on the project as information is
20 developed and made available. More information will made
21 available on the FERC website as Columbia files its
22 environmental resource reports and other information and any
23 written comments that are filed.

24 Instructions on how to access the FERC website
25 are in the Notice of Intent or NOI that most of you

1 received. The NOI also contains instructions on filing
2 written comments if you prefer to comment in that manner.
3 If you have not received an NOI, a few copies are available
4 at the table at the entrance or Danny has them up front.

5 I am going to briefly describe the projects and
6 FERC's role. Piedmont and Columbia have proposed to develop
7 a natural gas storage field in Hardy and Hampshire Counties,
8 West Virginia. The storage field is owned by Columbia and
9 is a depleted natural gas production field. The sandstone
10 formation used to store the gas is at a depth of about 6000
11 feet.

12 Columbia plans to rework 14 existing gas wells
13 and drill up to 14 new wells. About 28 miles of new
14 transmission pipeline would be constructed in the storage
15 field and 28 new storage lines of varying lengths would also
16 be constructed within the storage field in West Virginia. A
17 5000-horsepower compressor station would also be constructed
18 to inject gas into and withdraw gas out of the storage
19 field.

20 The Virginia Looping Project consist of four
21 segments of 24-inch diameter pipeline loop, totaling 33.5
22 miles along Columbia's existing pipeline system in
23 Shenandoah, Rockingham, Page, Green and Lousia Counties. A
24 loop is a parallel pipeline that ties into the existing
25 pipeline transmission system that will aid in transporting

1 additional volumes of gas.

2 Columbia is currently doing environmental studies
3 on its pipeline route and storage field and consulting
4 various agencies to develop its environmental reports.
5 Columbia has entered into a pre-filing process that FERC has
6 recently initiated for these projects.

7 Pre-filing allows FERC to become involved earlier
8 in the process to help facilitate the interaction with
9 federal and state agencies and affected landowners with the
10 goal of preparing a more complete application for the actual
11 project filing. Columbia will file resource reports at FERC
12 as part of its application when the project is filed.
13 Columbia expects to file with FERC in April of 2005.

14 The environmental reports that are developed will
15 be updated and supplemented throughout the environmental
16 process based on consultations with FERC and other federal,
17 state and local agencies. Comments received from the public
18 will also be incorporated. Some of the topics covered in
19 the resource reports include geology, soils, water
20 resources, vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, threaten and
21 endangered species, land use, cultural resources,
22 reliability, safety, air and noise quality and alternatives.

23 The resource reports will be used to write the
24 EA, which will be sent out for comment to regulatory
25 agencies, the affected public and other interested parties

1 for additional input. Comments on the EA will be
2 incorporated into the proceedings brought before the
3 Commissioners, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
4 itself. Other FERC staff look at various economic issues --
5 the need, the markets, the rates and cost of service and
6 other issues.

7 Eventually, all these processes come together in
8 a draft order on the project that is presented to the
9 Commission for their consideration. The Commissioners will
10 vote to approve or deny the project. A Commission vote is
11 expected sometime in the latter part of 2005. Also, before
12 construction would begin, all approvals and permits from the
13 various agencies would need to be obtained.

14 At this time, Carl Levander from Columbia has
15 asked to say a few words.

16 MR. LEVANDER: Thank you, Bob.

17 My name is Carl Levander. I with Columbia Gas
18 Transmission. I wanted to take the opportunity to first
19 thank you all for coming out this evening, offer a few
20 comments about the project and then a number of my colleague
21 are here. After we finish hearing from you in the formal
22 setting, we're going to stick around as long as need be to
23 answer any questions that you all might have.

24 Just to give you a sense of the project and the
25 timing, from our perspective, as Bob mentioned, we have

1 begun the process of looking at developing a new storage
2 formation here in Hardy and Hampshire Counties, West
3 Virginia. There's a map up here and we can go into more
4 detail later about what is specifically involved in terms of
5 the construction. And, in order to do that, we have begun
6 what Bob referred to, the NEPA pre-filing process with the
7 FERC.

8 This is really just all about finding different
9 ways to collect public input and information as we go
10 through the permitting process as part of getting
11 authorization for the construction. We were out in this
12 area back in August. We held some open houses trying to get
13 comments and to offer information to the public. We're back
14 here again at the request the FERC as part of the scoping
15 really for the same purpose. We'd like to hear from you any
16 questions or concerns that you have about the project.

17 And I'd like to reiterate what Bob said. We're
18 at a preliminary stage here in terms of what we're doing.
19 We know what we want to build. We know where the formation
20 is in terms of the depth, but really how we go about getting
21 there is really what we're working through now. And we'd
22 like to present the plans that we have, solicit any input
23 that you all have. And, if there are concerns, try to find
24 ways to accommodate that as we're working through the
25 process.

1 We're really at a fairly early stage in terms of
2 going through that. We've identified routes and locations
3 of where we'd like to be putting our facilities, but the
4 process now really is getting into the public input stage.

5 Because this is a pre-filing process, the maps
6 we're presenting and the information we're showing may well
7 change as we're going through this process. But we are
8 trying to collect input and we're going to make every effort
9 we can to keep people apprised of what's going on and what
10 changes may be made.

11 Bob ask me to make you aware of a couple of the
12 communication tools that we have. I think everybody was
13 given an information packet on the way in. If you don't
14 have one, we've got plenty. If you want to take a few back
15 for friends and neighbors, we're happy to pass those out as
16 well.

17 This has, on the back, a toll-free phone number
18 at which you can reach Columbia and there is also a website
19 that's referenced on the inside of the packet here where you
20 can keep up with project information via the internet. Both
21 of those are ways that we use to try keep information
22 flowing on the project.

23 That's really about all I had to say. As I've
24 said, we're going to be around answering questions as long
25 as need be and we do thank you for your participation this

1 evening.

2 MR. KOPKA: Thank you, Carl.

3 One last item before we get started with taking
4 your comments. I just wanted to remind everyone, if you
5 want to remain on the FERC mailing list, to either return
6 the mailer that was in the Notice of Intent, if you haven't
7 already done so. Or sign up at the table at the door.

8 Well, let's get started with your comments. I
9 ask that when you come up to the microphone, please say your
10 name slowly and spell your last name for the court reporter.
11 We have two people who have signed up to speak. After these
12 folks speak, then if any additional people would like to
13 speak, you're welcome to do so.

14 The first speaker is Lannie Combs. Mr. Combs?

15 MR. COMBS: Larry Combs.

16 MR. KOPKA: Larry? Sorry.

17 MR. COMBS: My name is Larry Combs. I live in
18 Broadway, Virginia. I'm a native West Virginian. I was
19 born and raised in the Needmore section of West Virginia.

20 My family has land the pipeline crosses at
21 several places. We do not lease our land for exploration
22 anymore. I'm not here to condemn or approve the project as
23 it stands now. I do have several concerns about what has
24 happened with the original pipeline that went through there.

25 During the original construction of this -- I'm

1 going to say the old pipeline or the original pipeline, the
2 topsoil was never removed and stored to be replaced after
3 the pipeline was constructed and installed. Shale and soot
4 soil is still visible on top of the ground. A lot of the
5 steep areas the shale is still visible. I mean, it's never
6 really grown back with any good ground cover or anything
7 like this. Of course, this allows erosion and there's
8 nothing, soil or anything there, to hold keep it from
9 running off.

10 There's several small drainages on our property
11 that I could originally jump across without getting my feet
12 wet. Now they're 30-feet wide. They're clogged up with
13 debris and this, that and the other. And I can't jump 30
14 feet and I don't know too many people who can.

15 Some of the ground cover that was planted -- and
16 this type that's not native to this area. And it's slowly
17 replacing the original fortune grass, Timothy and this sort
18 of thing that was native to the area.

19 I cannot find any fortune grass, Timothy,
20 whatever growing in any of the pipelines that cross my
21 property. This is a concern to me that the original grasses
22 and stuff like this and ground cover is going to be crowded
23 out and lost.

24 Another concern of mine is that there is a small
25 wetlands area on one of our pieces of property. The

1 pipeline goes right through the middle of it. The right-of-
2 way, of course, is open. And, of course, we gave Columbia
3 Gas permission to put the pipeline through our property.
4 The wetlands area was originally trees and brush and this
5 sort of thing and there's generally no traffic through
6 there. Well, with the open pipeline through the wetlands
7 area, it's just wide open for vehicular traffic and right on
8 through there people go, you know. And woodlands areas you
9 don't have fences to stop the vehicles, so anyone that wants
10 to trespass or run through these areas they just go right on
11 through.

12 The pipeline seems to be letting the wetlands
13 area spread out further than what it originally was.
14 Whether this is a problem or not, I don't know. But it just
15 sort of makes a mud hole out at the pipeline where the
16 wetlands area is now.

17 Another concern of mine was that when I was a few
18 years younger than what I was there were exploratory holes
19 drilled, either on the roads or some areas that I'm not
20 aware of. But I know a couple that were right along the
21 road. These holes were never capped off, closed, plugged or
22 anything. In wet spells, when we have a lot of rain and
23 this sort of thing, there's a lot of water that just comes
24 up out of these holes. I think some of the people surveying
25 the area, correctly or incorrectly, marked these areas or

1 one area that I'm aware of as a wetlands area. It was not a
2 wetlands area until someone at Columbia Gas or some
3 subsidiary or contractor drilled a hole there to allow the
4 water to come out.

5 Also, if water can come out when the water table
6 drops, water goes the other way. It's very easy to pollute
7 the aquifer under there. There's surface water runoff.
8 It's got a direct channel to any water storage that's in
9 those areas.

10 Like I say, I'm not here to condemn or to approve
11 of the project. I'm here to address some concerns that I
12 have as far as the environmental issues and I would hope
13 that Columbia Gas and the government would address these
14 issues if they approve the new project. Thank you.

15 MR. KOPKA: When you come up to the podium, just
16 be mindful of the microphone here on top of the podium.

17 The next speaker is Max Parks.

18 MR. PARKS: I'm Max Parks, P-A-R-K-S, of Baker,
19 West Virginia.

20 I really just signed up to -- if there was
21 something I needed to say or felt I needed to say to say it.
22 Anyway, I do have some concerns with the construction.

23 No. 1 is, being a farmer, it really would be
24 helpful if I knew the timetable when projects and so forth
25 would take place. There's no point -- where the line

1 crosses my property, if you're going to construct the line
2 in August, there's no point in me planting a crop in there
3 in May that I would harvest in October if you're going to go
4 through it. So, you know, just a timetable and schedule of
5 events would be helpful. That's my biggest concern. You
6 know, how do I plan my farming activities and so forth
7 around it.

8 I know when Columbia Gas built the original line,
9 they were very considerate. They left places for us to
10 cross when we needed to cross and that was helpful. So I
11 have no complaints except I would like to have information
12 as to dates and so forth. It would be helpful.

13 MR. KOPKA: Thank you, Mr. Parks.

14 Those were the only two speakers we had signed up
15 tonight. Has anyone else decided they'd like to speak?

16 Sir?

17 MR. HARMAN: My name is Wayne Harman,
18 H-A-R-M-A-N.

19 My concern is my property is next to the proposed
20 compressor station and I'm concerned about the noise level
21 because all the compressor stations I've ever been around or
22 heard are extremely noisy. And they talk about a
23 5000-horsepower motor, I guess, to operate the compressor
24 and this is going to make a tremendous amount of noise.

25 Now, prior to the meeting, they assured me that

1 you wouldn't be able to hear it but 3 feet way. I have my
2 doubts about that, but I guess we'll see. But noise level
3 to the neighbors is a big concern of mine, along with what
4 Mr. Parks said about restoring the right-of-way and properly
5 seeding it down and taking care of it. Thank you.

6 MR. KOPKA: Thank you, Mr. Harman.

7 Anyone else?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. KOPKA: Okay. Since there are no more
10 speakers, that concludes our scoping meeting tonight.

11 We're here if you'd like to talk to us. The
12 Columbia folks are here. So thank you for coming out
13 tonight.

14 (Whereupon, at 8:25 p.m., the above-entitled
15 matter was concluded.)

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