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BEFORE THE

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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IN THE MATTER OF: : Project No.

MOUNTAINEER XPRESS PROJECT : PF15-31-000

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The Lewis Wetzel Family Center

442 E. Benjamin Drive

New Martinsville, West Virginia 26149

Monday, December 7, 2015

The above-entitled matter came on for scoping  
meeting, pursuant to notice, at 6:00 p.m., Joanne Wachholder  
, the moderator.

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

2 (6:01 p.m.)

3 MS. WACHHOLDER: If everyone could take their  
4 seats, we're going to get started in a minute.

5 Good evening. On behalf of the Federal Energy  
6 Regulatory Commission or FERC or the Commission, I'd like to  
7 welcome all of you here tonight to an environmental scoping  
8 meeting for the Mountaineer Xpress Project under development  
9 by Columbia Gas Transmission LLC. Let the record show that  
10 the public scoping meeting in New Martinsville, West  
11 Virginia began at 6:01 p.m. on December 7th, 2015.

12 My name is Joanne Wachholder and I am an  
13 environmental project meeting at the Commission's Office of  
14 Energy Project. With me is Robyn Susemihl, with Burns and  
15 McDonnell Engineering. Burns and McDonnell is a consulting  
16 firm working as a third-party contractor to assist us in the  
17 preparation of the environmental impact statement or EIS for  
18 the project.

19 FERC is also represented tonight by Julia Yuan,  
20 another FERC environmental project manager.

21 Working at the sign-in table tonight is L. J.  
22 Sauter and Travis Levitt, both from Burns and McDonnell.

23 You will also notice that we have a court  
24 reporter with us tonight. The purpose for this is to ensure  
25 that we accurately capture your comments and questions both

1 for the public record and for our use in preparing the EIS  
2 for the Mountaineer Xpress Project.

3           The purpose of this meeting is to give you an  
4 opportunity to learn about and provide specific  
5 environmental comments on Columbia Gas' planned pipeline  
6 project, the Mountaineer Xpress Project.

7           I'll quickly run through the agenda for tonight.  
8 I'll start off by briefly describing the project before us.  
9 I will also explain the role of the FERC and our application  
10 process. Then we will hear from those of you who signed up  
11 to speak at the table in the back and make formal comments  
12 on the project.

13           If we have time at the end of the meeting anyone  
14 who did not sign up but would like to have their comments  
15 heard will have a chance to speak.

16           The meeting will end once all speakers have  
17 provided their comments or by 10 p.m., whichever comes  
18 first.

19           Mountaineer Xpress would involve construction of  
20 about 161 miles of new 36-inch diameter natural gas  
21 pipeline, six miles of 24-inch diameter lateral pipeline and  
22 three new compressor stations. It will also include  
23 replacement of two short sections of 30-inch diameter  
24 pipeline, installation of additional compression at three  
25 other compressor stations, and construction of related

1 facilities.

2 All of the facilities will be constructed and  
3 installed in 14 counties of western West Virginia.

4 The project would supply about 2.7 billion  
5 standard cubic feet per day of natural gas transportation  
6 capacity from production areas to downstream markets on the  
7 Columbia Gas System.

8 After our meeting here is adjourned  
9 representatives from Columbia Gas will still be available  
10 with project maps to answer questions about the project.

11 Next I'm going to talk a bit about the scoping  
12 process and public involvement in FERC projects in general.

13 First, the FERC is an independent, federal agency  
14 that among other things regulates the interstate  
15 transmission of natural gas. In this regard the FERC review  
16 -- reviews and evaluates proposals to construct and operate  
17 interstate natural gas pipeline facilities, natural gas  
18 storage facilities and liquefied natural gas terminals.

19 As a federal licensing agency, the FERC is  
20 required by the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA to  
21 consider the potential environmental impacts associated with  
22 new natural gas facilities such as Mountaineer Xpress during  
23 its review and evaluation process.

24 Scoping, which we are engaged in tonight, is the  
25 period during which we solicit input from the public before

1 beginning the environmental analysis. The idea is to get  
2 information from the public as well as agencies and other  
3 groups regarding what issues need to be addressed. This is  
4 an important step because it allows you to indicate what  
5 environmental resource issues are important.

6 Your comments tonight together with any written  
7 comments you may have already submitted or intend to submit  
8 will be added to the record and used to focus our  
9 environmental analysis.

10 For the Mountaineer Xpress Project the FERC is  
11 the lead federal agency for the NEPA review and the  
12 preparation of the EIS.

13 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S.  
14 Environmental Protection Agency, West Virginia Department of  
15 Environmental Protection and West Virginia Division of  
16 Natural Resources have agreed to participate as cooperating  
17 agencies in the preparation of the EIS.

18 These agencies plan to use the EIS to meet their  
19 respective NEPA responsibilities associated with issuing  
20 their permits.

21 As I said earlier, the purpose of this meeting  
22 tonight is to give you an opportunity to comment on the  
23 environmental issues that you would like to see covered in  
24 the EIS.

25 It will help us the most if your comments are as

1 specific as possible regarding the potential environmental  
2 impacts and reasonable alternatives for the planned  
3 Mountaineer Xpress Project.

4 Scoping comments generally focus on the potential  
5 for environmental effects, but may also address construction  
6 issues, mitigation, and the environmental review process.

7 In addition this meeting is designed to provide  
8 you with an opportunity to meet with Columbia Gas  
9 representatives to ask them questions and to get more  
10 detailed information about their proposed route, facility  
11 locations, and constructions plans.

12 Now I want to briefly describe our environmental  
13 review process for you. To illustrate how this process  
14 works, we've prepared a flow chart which is over here. This  
15 was appended to the notice of intent that you could get at  
16 the back table. There are several copies left. This  
17 document.

18 Currently we are near the beginning of our  
19 environmental review process. We are presently in the first  
20 of two periods labeled public input opportunities. Our  
21 review of the planned project began on September 16th, 2015  
22 when Columbia Gas' request to begin using the FERC's  
23 pre-filing process was approved.

24 The FERC's docket number for Mountaineer Xpress  
25 is PF15-31-000. The docket number is unique to the project

1 and is associated with all project materials.

2 PF means that we are in the pre-filing stage of  
3 the process. The purpose of the pre-filing process is to  
4 encourage involvement by all interested stakeholders in a  
5 manner that allows for the early identification and  
6 resolution of environmental issues.

7 Once Columbia Gas files a formal application a  
8 new docket number will be assigned that is preceded with  
9 C-P, which means there will be in the certificate proceeding  
10 stage of the process.

11 As of today no formal application has been filed  
12 by Columbia Gas and we are in the early stages of the  
13 project review period. However, the FERC along with other  
14 federal, state, and local agency staffs has begun review of  
15 the project.

16 For those of you who have access to FERC's  
17 e-library website for project documents, you've seen that  
18 Columbia Gas has begun filing draft resource reports. These  
19 draft document describe Columbia Gas' planned project and as  
20 future documents are filed, they will describe the  
21 environmental features crossed by the plan project, the  
22 results of environmental surveys, and Columbia Gas' proposed  
23 mitigation measures and plans.

24 On November 18th we issued a notice of intent or  
25 NOI to prepare an EIS for this project which I hope most of

1 you received in the mail. In the NOI we described the  
2 environmental review process, some already identified  
3 environmental issues, and the steps the FERC and cooperating  
4 agencies will take to prepare the EIS for the project.

5           The NOI also initiated the scoping period which  
6 will end on December 17th. However, the end of the scoping  
7 period is not the end of public involvement. We will accept  
8 comments throughout our review of the project. However, for  
9 us to adequately address your comments, analyze them, and  
10 research the issues, we ask that you try to get those to us  
11 as soon as possible. There will also be a comment period  
12 once the draft EIS is published.

13           Once scoping is finished, our next step will be  
14 to begin our independent analysis of Columbia Gas' proposal  
15 and the project's potential impacts on the issues and  
16 resources identified during scoping. This will include an  
17 examination of the proposed facility locations as well as  
18 alternative sites.

19           We will assess the project's impacts on water  
20 bodies and wetlands, vegetation and wildlife, endangered  
21 species, cultural resources, socioeconomics, geologic  
22 resources, soils, land use, air and noise quality, and  
23 safety.

24           We will assemble information from a variety of  
25 sources which would include Columbia Gas, the public, other

1 federal, state, and local agencies and our own analysis and  
2 field work.

3           When complete, our analysis of the potential  
4 impacts will be published as a draft EIS and presented to  
5 the public for a 45-day comment period.

6           This draft EIS will be mailed to all interested  
7 parties. During the comment period we will hold more public  
8 meetings to gather feedback on our analysis and findings.  
9 After revising the draft EIS to respond to public comments  
10 and any new information, a final EIS will be mailed to all  
11 interested parties.

12           Please note that because of the size of the  
13 mailing list, the EIS is often mailed as a compact disk or  
14 CD. That means, unless you tell us otherwise, the EIS that  
15 you will find in your mailbox will be on a CD. If you  
16 prefer to have paper copy mailed to you, you must indicate  
17 that choice on the return mailer attached to the NOI. You  
18 all can also indicate that on the attendance sheet tonight  
19 at the sign-in table.

20           As I mentioned earlier, our issuance of the NOI  
21 opened a formal comment period that will close on December  
22 17th. The NOI encourages you to submit your comments as  
23 soon as possible to give us the time to analyze and research  
24 the issues. If you received the NOI in the mail, you are  
25 currently on our mailing list and will remain our mailing

1 list to receive the EIS and any other supplemental notices  
2 we may issue about the project.

3           If you return the mailer attached to the back of  
4 the NOI and indicate you wish to be removed from the mailing  
5 list if the route does not affect your property any longer  
6 and you don't want mail from us, you can let us know that  
7 too.

8           Again, there are extra copies of the NOI  
9 available at the sign-in table. The mailing list for a  
10 project of this scope is large and undergoing constant  
11 revision. You can be added to our mailing list by signing  
12 up at the sign-in table or by submitting environmental  
13 comments on the project.

14           I would like to add that the FERC encourages  
15 electronic filing of all comments and other documents.  
16 There's a small brochure, it looks like this, that explains  
17 the FERC's e-filing system. And we have a whole bunch extra  
18 at the sign-in table.

19           Also instructions for this can be located on our  
20 website which is [www.FERC.gov](http://www.FERC.gov) under the e-filing link you  
21 can find this information.

22           If you want to submit written comments, please  
23 follow the directions in the NOI. A link called  
24 e-subscription is also available for you to sign up using an  
25 e-mail address to receive e-mails each time a document is

1 filed in the docket.

2           It is very important that any comments you send,  
3 either electronically or by traditional mail, include the  
4 docket number for this project.

5           The docket number is on the cover of the NOI on  
6 the upper right-hand side. If you decide to send us a  
7 comment letter, please put that number on the top. That  
8 will ensure that members of the staff evaluating the project  
9 will get your comments as soon as possible.

10           And, again, that docket number is PF15-31-000.

11           Now, I want to differentiate between the roles of  
12 two parts of FERC, the Commission and the environmental  
13 staff. Julie and I are part of the FERC environmental staff  
14 and we will oversee preparation of the EIS for this project.  
15 We don't determine whether or not the project gets approved.  
16 Rather the FERC Commission which consists of up to five  
17 presidentially appointed commissioners is responsible for  
18 making a determination on whether to issue a certificate of  
19 public convenience and necessity to Columbia Gas.

20           The EIS will describe the project facilities and  
21 associated environmental impacts, alternatives to the  
22 project, mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts, and the  
23 environmental staff, our conclusions and recommendations.

24           The EIS is not a decision-making document, but  
25 will disclose to the public and to the Commission the

1 environmental impact of constructing and operating the  
2 Mountaineer Xpress Project.

3           The Commission will consider the environmental  
4 information presented in the EIS as well as public comments  
5 and a host of non-environmental issues -- these could  
6 include engineering, markets, and rates -- in making its  
7 decision to approve or deny Columbia Gas' request for a  
8 certificate.

9           There is no review of FERC decisions by the  
10 president or Congress, which maintains the FERC's  
11 independence as a regulatory agency and provides for fair  
12 and unbiased decisions.

13           Only after taking the environmental and  
14 non-environmental factors into consideration will the  
15 Commission make its final decision on whether or not to  
16 approve the project.

17           At this time if there are any questions about  
18 scoping or the FERC's process, you can raise your hand and  
19 come up to the mike if you have any questions about it.

20           (No response.)

21           MS. WACHHOLDER: I did such a good job you have  
22 no questions. That's great. Okay.

23           We will now begin the important part of the  
24 meeting where we're here for your comments.

25           We will first take comments from any who signed

1 up. Do we have anyone who signed up? We do. Yeah.

2           Okay. You can turn that one on. And, again,  
3 some people aren't comfortable speaking in front of people,  
4 so if you have comments you want to write down, you can give  
5 them to us that way too. It's equal weight. The form is at  
6 the sign-in table and you can use that to write comments.  
7 And you can either hand them in tonight or mail them later.

8           There are also instructions on the form how to  
9 mail them in. Later when you provide your comments verbally  
10 or by mail or electronically, they're all considered equally  
11 by FERC.

12           As I said before, this meeting is being recorded  
13 by a court reporter so that all of your comments and  
14 questions will be transcribed and put into the public  
15 record.

16           To help the court reporter produce an accurate  
17 record of this meeting, I ask that you please follow some  
18 ground rules. When your name is called, please step up to  
19 the microphone, state your name, and spell it for the  
20 record. Identify any agency or group you are representing  
21 and define any acronyms you may use.

22           Lastly, before we start, as a courtesy to our  
23 speakers and the rest of the audience, please turn off or  
24 silence your cell phones. Now we will call our first  
25 speaker. First and only. So, John Hudson, if you would

1 like to come up.

2 MR. HUDSON: Hi, John Hudson. For the record,  
3 I've been selected by about 20 of us here, with the  
4 Teamsters Union to come up and speak so we're not all  
5 repetitious.

6 Would all you all stand up that are with us here?

7 (Standing.)

8 MR. HUDSON: Thank you. We're naturally for this  
9 pipeline because of the jobs. We all need the jobs  
10 desperately bad. What better way can you have for your  
11 environmental things but people that live here and work  
12 here, they're going to take care of this dirt because they  
13 live here. We have about 400 trained pipe liners out of the  
14 local here in Wheeling. That's all they do for a living.

15 You know, pipeline is a temporary job because  
16 we're always trying to get that pipe in the ground to go to  
17 the next one. But a temporary job leads you to another  
18 temporary job to another temporary job to another temporary  
19 job. And you know when we think about it, what would we do  
20 without pipelines? These lights, and the gas that are here,  
21 they're brought to us by a pipeline so that we can stay warm  
22 and we can have water to drink. But the bottom line is,  
23 with the coal industry the way it is in West Virginia, we  
24 all need these jobs. We need them desperately bad because  
25 they're just not much out there. These are good-paying

1 jobs, they've got good benefits, health and welfare,  
2 pensions, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And, again, the  
3 people that will work on this live here. So they want to  
4 keep your environment clean. They have worked on these jobs  
5 and environmental crews. They know what to do. They know  
6 when to put out hay bails or when to tell a foreman you need  
7 extra silt fence or whatever on all of these jobs. So we're  
8 here to tell you, we have a qualified workforce, we put on  
9 training schools, we feel like we have some of the best and  
10 most competent pipeline workers in the United States right  
11 here. Everybody has come to West Virginia in the last two  
12 or three years because of a lot of work here. And, again,  
13 we're for it. Whatever we need to do to help, we'll be glad  
14 to do it. And with that, I thank you for letting me come up  
15 and speak.

16 MS. WACHHOLDER: Thank you, Mr. Hudson.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. WACHHOLDER: Is there anybody else who would  
19 like to come up and speak?

20 (No response.)

21 MS. WACHHOLDER: Seeing nothing. Okay. Any  
22 other questions that you might have thought of while you  
23 were sitting there?

24 (No response.)

25 MS. WACHHOLDER: Well, if there aren't any other

1 commenters or questions, then the formal part of this  
2 meeting will end.

3           On behalf of the Federal Energy Regulatory  
4 Commission I'd like to thank you all for coming tonight.

5           Let the record show that the Mountaineer Xpress  
6 Project's scoping meeting in New Martinsville, West Virginia  
7 concluded at 6:20 p.m.

8           Thank you very much and if you have additional  
9 questions for Columbia or us, feel free to come talk to us.

10           Thank you.

11           (Whereupon, at 6:20 p.m., the meeting was  
12 adjourned.)

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