

for Major natural gas companies, and Form No. 2-A (Form No. 2-A), Annual report for Nonmajor natural gas companies.⁶

The Commission is proposing the changes in order to create forms, reports, and statements that reflect the current regulatory environment of unbundled pipeline sales for resale at market-based prices and open-access transportation of natural gas. In doing that, the Commission seeks to simplify and streamline its requirements to reduce the burden on respondents. Hence, the Commission is proposing to eliminate reporting requirements (as well as a few non-reporting requirements) that are outdated or nonessential in light of current regulation, or are duplicative of other reporting requirements. At the same time, the proposed revisions, especially of Form No. 2, will provide financial, rate, and statistical information on transactions that is more useful than what is currently available to regulatory agencies and other users of the financial statements and reports of natural gas companies. The Commission believes the proposed changes to Form No. 2 are needed because companies are giving different accounting treatment to similar transactions, and the characteristics of certain balance sheet and income statement items for the restructured industry are different from what they were when the current accounting regulations were adopted.

In Part III, A of this NOPR, the Commission will discuss the proposed changes to the Uniform System of Accounts with respect to storage gas. In Part III, B the Commission will address the other proposed revisions to the Uniform System of Accounts. In Part IV, the Commission will discuss the changes to Part 250 of the Commission's regulations, "Approved Forms, Natural Gas Act." In Part V, the Commission will discuss the proposed changes to Part 260 of the Commission's regulations, "Statements and Reports (Schedules)." That discussion will include the proposed changes to Forms No. 2⁷ and No. 2-A.⁸ In Part VI, the

Commission will discuss the proposed changes to Part 284 of the Commission's regulations, "Certain Sales and Transportation of Natural Gas Under the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 and Related Authorities."

The Commission recognizes that the changes to these regulations and forms and to the regulations in the companion notice of proposed rulemaking titled, "Filing Requirements for Interstate Natural Gas Company Rate Schedules and Tariffs," will necessitate modifications to the electronic formats for the affected filings and forms. To ensure the widest possible input, the Commission is directing its staff here, and in the companion NOPR, to convene a single technical conference to obtain the participation of the industry and other users of the filed information in designing the electronic filing requirements. By the time the Commission issues final rules in these companion rulemakings, the Commission expects staff, with the participation of interested parties, to have developed the changes needed to make the electronic filings that would be required under the regulations proposed in both of the rulemaking proceedings. The Commission intends to move toward a PC-based electronic filing system and away from mainframes. The Commission intends to use user friendly form-fill, word processing, and spreadsheet application software as much as possible.

The changes to the Uniform System of Accounts and Form Nos. 2 and 2-A in this NOPR are proposed to be effective January 1, 1995. The remainder of the proposed rule is proposed to be effective 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

II. Public Reporting Burden

The proposed rule, if adopted, would establish new reporting requirements, modify existing reporting requirements and eliminate those requirements that are now obsolete. The Commission seeks to simplify and streamline its requirements to reduce the burden on pipelines. The current public reporting burden for these information collections is estimated to average the following number of hours per response: FERC Form No. 2—2,475 hours for the 46 gas companies that complete a filing; FERC Form No. 2-A—30 hours for the 87 gas companies that complete a filing; FERC Form No. 11—5.7 hours for the 50 gas companies that complete a filing; FERC Form No. 549—2.7 hours for the 294 companies that complete a filing; FERC

Form No. 549B—6,770 hours for the 78 gas companies that complete a filing; FERC Form No. 576—3 hours for the 8 gas companies that complete a filing; FERC Form No. 8—3.6 hours for the 30 gas companies that complete a filing; and FPC-14 (redesignated herein as FERC Form No. 14)—3.1 hours for the 46 gas companies that complete a filing. These estimates include the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

With respect to the gas companies filing the FERC Form No. 2, the Commission believes that there will be an average burden decrease due to the elimination of several schedules and significant increases in the thresholds for the reporting of information on other schedules. There will be some additional information required, but there should be a minimal burden increase as a result, because much of the information is already collected by the industry in other contexts.

Also, those natural gas companies filing the FERC Form No. 2-A, and previously designated as "Nonmajor" who do not presently use the accounts formerly reserved for Major natural gas companies, may experience a one-time increase in burden associated with the conversion of their books and records. It is anticipated that this one-time burden will not be significant.

The Commission estimates the public reporting burden for other filing requirements under the proposed rule will reduce the existing reporting burden. With respect to FERC Form No. 11, the semi-annual Form No. 11 will contain monthly details of data required annually on an aggregate basis in FERC Form No. 2. The semi-annual filing of FERC Form No. 11 on April 30 and October 31 of each year, rather than monthly, will reduce the number of reports from 600 to 100. In addition, data are primarily required by rate schedule or Uniform System of Accounts entries. These consistencies in reporting will simplify the filing burden. The revised reporting schedule will reduce the existing reporting burden by a total of 2,500 hours, or approximately 50 hours per respondent each year.

The proposed elimination of initial, subsequent, termination, and annual reports, FERC Form No. 549, for interstate pipelines, and the retention of only the annual reports for intrastate pipelines, will reduce the reporting burden by a total of 13,295 hours. The Commission estimates that the annual report for the 75 remaining respondents

⁶ Form No. 2 consists of approximately 162 non-consecutively numbered pages and a four-page index. See 18 CFR 260.1. The current version bears OMB approval No. 1902-0028. Form No. 2-A consists of approximately 22 consecutively numbered pages, 1-22, and 32 non-consecutively numbered substitute pages from the Form No. 2 that may be used in lieu of the comparable pages in the first section. See 18 CFR 260.2. The current version bears OMB approval No. 1902-0030.

⁷ Appendix A consists of the proposed revised Form No. 2. Appendix A is not being published in the **Federal Register**, but is available from the Commission's Public Reference Room.

⁸ Appendix B consists of the proposed revised Form No. 2-A. Appendix B is not being published

in the **Federal Register**, but is available from the Commission's Public Reference Room.