

environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the facilities proposed in the St. Clair River Crossing Project.¹ This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary and whether to approve the project.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Great Lakes Gas Transmission Limited Partnership (Great Lakes) seeks authority to amend its Presidential Permit (under Docket No. CP66-111-003) and construct, connect, operate, and maintain (under Docket No. CP96-26-000) about 1,500 feet of 36-inch-diameter pipeline loop at the international border between the United States and Canada, in St. Clair County, Michigan.

Great Lakes states that the proposed border facilities would be used to provide 50,000 thousand cubic feet per day of winter firm transportation service to TransCanada Pipelines Limited (TransCanada). Great Lakes indicates that the facilities, along with additional facilities TransCanada would build on its system, would provide TransCanada with greater system security and reliability of service.

The proposed river crossing would be directionally drilled. Great Lakes proposes to operate the drill rig on the United States side of the river, on land owned by Great Lakes. The pipeline would be strung and staged on the Canadian side.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.²

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would require a staging area about 150 feet by 250 feet. No additional permanent right-of-way would be required after construction. An existing cleared area north of Puttygut Road would be used as a contractor yard. This area was used for this purpose during construction of the RG&E III Project (Docket No. CP92-595-000).

Permanent aboveground facilities would consist of a mainline valve and a "pig launcher" in the vicinity of Great lakes' existing mainline valve.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping". The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- Geology and soils.
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands.
- Land use.
- Cultural resources.
- Vegetation and wildlife.
- Endangered and threatened species.
- Air quality and noise.
- Hazardous waste.

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we recommend that the Commission approve or not approve the project.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the

proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by Great Lakes. Keep in mind that this is a preliminary list:

- Noise generated during the continuous operation of the directional drill rig used to install the pipeline under the St. Clair River may significantly impact nearby residences.
- Drilling mud and fluids must be handled and disposed of properly or significant impact on the St. Clair River and nearby wetland could result.
- Construction activities may impact the wetland located near the proposed staging area.
- There may be visual impacts associated with the permanent aboveground facilities.

The list of issues may be added to, subtracted from, or changed based on your comments and our analysis.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal (including alternative locations), and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please follow the instructions below to ensure that your comments are received and properly recorded:

- Address your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426;
- Reference Docket Nos. CP66-111-003 and CP96-26-000;
- Send a *copy* of your letter to: Mr. Howard Wheeler, EA Project Manager, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., PR-11.2, Washington, D.C. 20426; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, D.C. on or before January 19, 1996.

If you wish to receive a copy of the EA, you should request one from Mr. Wheeler at the above address.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding or become an "intervenor". Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide copies of its filings to all other parties. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of

¹ Great Lakes Transmission Limited Partnership's application was filed with the Commission under section 3 of the Natural Gas Act, sections 153.10 through 153.12 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, and Executive Order 10485 (as amended by Executive Order 12038 and Secretary of Energy Delegation Order No. 0204-112).

² The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the Federal Register. Copies are available from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.