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Industries

LNG - Environmental Impact Statements (EISs)

FERC staff issues Final Environmental Impact Statement on Dominion Cove Point Expansion Project (Docket Nos. CP05-310-000 *et al.*)

Issued: April 28, 2006

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has prepared a final environmental impact statement (EIS) on the natural gas facilities proposed by Dominion Cove Point LNG, LP and Dominion Transmission, Inc. (collectively referred to as Dominion) in the above-referenced dockets. Dominion proposes to expand the existing Cove Point liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal in Calvert County, Maryland; construct 48 miles of new natural gas pipeline in Maryland; and construct 113 miles of natural gas pipeline and associated facilities in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and New York. The purpose of the Cove Point Expansion Project is to deliver new gas supplies to the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern states. The proposed facilities in Maryland would bring additional winter supplies to the Mid-Atlantic region; and the proposed facilities in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and New York would allow additional supplies to be stored in the summer and moved to the Northeast for use during periods of peak need in the winter.

The final EIS was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the U.S. Coast Guard have participated as cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS.

Staff concludes that if the proposed projects are found to be in the public interest and is constructed and operated in accordance with Dominion's proposed mitigation and our recommended mitigation measures, the proposed facilities would have limited adverse impacts.

The primary reasons for our decision are:

- o The LNG terminal facilities would be an expansion of an existing, fully operating LNG import terminal with an established deep water dock and established exclusion zones.
- o The additional LNG ship traffic would result from the expansion would utilize an existing shipping corridor used by existing LNG vessels as well as other deep draft vessels.
- o The proposed pipeline facilities would follow existing rights-of-way for about 90 percent of the proposed pipeline routes.
- o Dominion has routed the pipeline facilities to avoid placement of the construction work area near residences to the maximum extent practicable.
- o Dominion would implement the FERC's Plan and Procedures to minimize impacts on soils, wetlands, and waterbodies.
- o Sensitive waterbodies, such as St. Leonard Creek, Patuxent River, Hunting Creek, and Mattawoman Creek in Maryland; and the Juniata River and Bald Eagle Creek in Pennsylvania, would be crossed using directional drill methodology.
- o Noise impacts resulting from aboveground facilities can be adequately mitigated with our recommended measures.
- o Appropriate consultations with the FWS, the Corps, state historic preservation officers, the Maryland Department of Environment (for coastal zone management plan and consistency plan determination) would be required before Dominion would be allowed to begin construction.
- o Safety features would be incorporated into the design and operation of the LNG terminal expansion facilities and LNG vessels.
- o If the Coast Guard issues a LOR finding the waterway to be suitable for increased LNG marine traffic, the operational controls that would be imposed by the local pilots and the Coast Guard to direct movement of LNG ships, and security provisions would deter attacks by a potential terrorists.
- o The environmental and engineering inspection and mitigation monitoring program for this project would ensure compliance with all mitigation measures that become conditions of any FERC authorization.
- o All federal, state and local authorizations would be required prior to project construction

(see table 1.3.5.1 of the final EIS).

FERC Commissioners will take into consideration staff's recommendations and the final EIS when they make a decision on the projects.

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Note: Maps and figures that contain Non-Internet Public information are not included in above electronic files.

Updated: May 1, 2006

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