

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

In Reply Refer To:
OEP/DG2E/Gas 1
Northern Natural Gas Company
South Sioux City to Sioux Falls
A-line Replacement Project
Docket No. PF19-8-000

July 23, 2019

VIA FERC Service

Michael T. Loeffler
Senior Director, Certificates and External Affairs
Northern Natural Gas Company
1111 South 103rd Street
Omaha, NE 68124

Re: Approval of Pre-Filing Request

Dear Mr. Loeffler:

Thank you for your letter, filed July 16, 2019, requesting use of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC or Commission) pre-filing review process for Northern Natural Gas Company's (Northern) planned South Sioux City to Sioux Falls A-line Replacement Project. We believe that beginning the Commission's review of this proposal prior to the receipt of your application will greatly improve our ability to identify issues early and address them in our environmental document.

As stated in your letter, Northern plans to abandon in-place 79.2 miles of its 14-inch-diameter A-line from South Sioux City, Nebraska to Sioux Falls, South Dakota and replace the line with 84.2 miles of 12-inch-diameter pipeline. In addition, Northern plans to abandon in-place its 0.2-mile-long 2-inch-diameter Ponca Branch Line, and replace it with a 2.0-mile-long 3-inch-diameter pipeline. Northern also plans to install appurtenant facilities including pig launchers and receivers, regulators, tie-overs, an odorizer, and associated piping and valves. The project purpose is to protect pipeline integrity by reducing the operating pressure of the pipeline.

Your letter also stated that Northern intends to file an application no later than July 28, 2020. When Northern files its application with the Commission, we will evaluate the progress made during the pre-filing process, based in part on your success in resolving the issues raised during scoping. Once we determine that your application is ready for

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processing, we will establish a schedule for completion of the environmental document and for the issuance of all other federal authorizations.

As outlined in your request, Northern intends to file an applicant-prepared draft environmental assessment (EA) with its certificate application. The objective of the applicant-prepared draft EA is to accelerate staff review after filing an application; however, close coordination with my staff is necessary to ensure the draft EA is adequately crafted to realize the benefits of this process. Your request also describes Northern's commitment to provide a third-party contractor to assist our staff in the preparation of the environmental document should we determine that necessary. At this time, I believe that my staff can proceed with the pre-filing process without a third-party contractor. Staff will notify you should we determine contractor assistance is necessary.

Once Northern files its application, your project may qualify as a covered project under Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). We encourage you to review the information regarding FAST-41 on our website, www.ferc.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Energy Projects' Environmental Project Manager for your project, Dawn Ramsey at (202) 502-6856.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Turpin
Director
Office of Energy Projects

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