

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

In Reply Refer To:  
OEP/DG2E/Gas 4  
Northern Natural Gas Company  
Northern Lights 2021 Expansion  
Project  
Docket No. PF20-1-000

December 6, 2019

VIA FERC Service

Michael Loeffler  
Senior Director, Certificates and External Affairs  
Northern Natural Gas Company  
P.O. Box 3330  
Omaha, Nebraska 68103-0330

**Re: Approval of Pre-Filing Request**

Dear Mr. Loeffler:

Thank you for your letter, filed November 27, 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 Northern Lights 2021 Expansion 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 construct the following proposed facilities; all in Minnesota: 8.3 miles of 30- and 36-inch-diameter mainline loops and extensions; 13.3 miles of branch line loops and extensions ranging in size between 6- and 30-inch diameter; one new compressor station and modifications at two compressor existing stations; and modifications at an interconnect.

Your letter also stated that Northern intends to file an application no later than August 21, 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 processing, we will establish a schedule for completion of the environmental document and for the issuance of all other federal authorizations.

- 2 -

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 it 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](http://www.ferc.gov).

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Energy Projects' Environmental Project Manager for your project, Doug Cotton at (202) 502-6590.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Turpin  
Director  
Office of Energy Projects

Document Content(s)

PF20-1 Approval Letter 6Dec2019.PDF.....1-2