

FERC asks public what should be covered in Alaska LNG review

By Larry Persily lpersily@kpb.us

Oct. 8, 2015

(This update, provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough mayor's office, is part of an ongoing effort to help keep the public informed about the Alaska LNG project.)

Federal regulators have scheduled half a dozen meetings across Alaska the last week of October — with more coming in November — to hear from the public on issues they want addressed in the environmental impact statement for the Alaska LNG project.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is in charge of the single EIS that federal agencies will rely on for the Alaska project. The October/November meetings are part of what is called the “scoping” process, providing the public — individuals, local governments, businesses and other interested parties — a chance to comment on the scope of the environmental review, the range of specific topics or issues that should be addressed.

Public comment on the EIS itself will come later, after FERC and its contractor draft the environmental review based on information from the project sponsors and regulatory agencies.

The scoping meetings are scheduled for:

- Nikiski Recreation Center, Oct. 27.
- Kaktovik Community Center, Oct. 27.
- Houston High School, Oct. 28.
- Barrow Inupiat Heritage Center, Oct. 28.
- Trapper Creek Elementary School, Oct. 29.
- Nuiqsut Kisik Community Center, Oct. 29.

All of the meetings are scheduled to start at 6 p.m. and will end “once all speakers have provided their comments or at 9 p.m., whichever comes first,” FERC said in its Oct. 8 meeting announcement.

In addition to FERC officials listening to the public, Alaska LNG project representatives “will be present one hour before the scoping meeting at all locations ... with maps depicting the project and to answer questions,” the federal notice said. Except in Barrow, where project representatives will give their presentation one hour after the scoping meeting ends, FERC said.

Additional meetings in other communities are still being scheduled.

“You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project,” FERC said in its March 2015 Notice of Intent to start the environmental review. “Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and

measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be.”

The nine-month scoping period closes Dec. 4, 2015. In addition to the public meetings, FERC is accepting written comments — there are three options for submitting written comments about the scope of the federal EIS for the proposed Alaska LNG project. All filings with FERC must include the project’s docket number, PF14-21.

- For brief, text-only comments, use the [eComment](#) feature on the [FERC website](#). No registration is required.
- For longer filings, use the [eFiling](#) feature on the [FERC website](#). This requires [registration](#). The eFiling option allows attachments with the comments.
- Or mail comments to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; 888 First St. NE, Room 1A; Washington, DC 20426

FERC staff is available to assist the public in electronic filing (call 202-502-8258 or email efiling@ferc.gov).

The Alaska LNG sponsors — producers ExxonMobil, BP and ConocoPhillips, along with the state of Alaska and TransCanada — have been working the past few years to develop a \$45 billion to \$65 billion project to transport North Slope gas more than 800 miles to a proposed liquefaction plant and marine terminal in Nikiski, where the LNG would be loaded into carriers for delivery to overseas customers.

Project teams were kept busy with summer 2015 field data collections and are working on design, engineering, environmental and routing issues in preparation for submitting a complete application to FERC, currently expected in the third quarter of 2016. FERC approval is required to build and operate a liquefaction plant in the United States.

As part of the application and EIS process, Alaska LNG is working to prepare 13 “resource reports” on the project. The reports will cover current conditions; the project’s potential impacts on resources such as waterways, soils and air quality; and proposed mitigation measures to reduce any impacts. The report topics are:

1. Detailed project description
2. Wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, water uses and quality
3. Fish, wildlife, vegetation and endangered species
4. Cultural resources, archeology
5. Socioeconomics, housing, jobs and government impacts
6. Geological resources and hazards
7. Soils, potential erosion
8. Current land use, recreation, esthetics

9. Air and noise impacts
10. Project alternatives
11. Pipeline system reliability, safety
12. PCB contamination
13. Engineering and design

Alaska LNG submitted its first draft reports to FERC in February 2015, providing information on current conditions but little in the way of project-specific impacts. A second draft of the reports is expected in the first quarter of 2016, which will provide extensive details on construction plans and how the multibillion-dollar pipeline, North Slope gas treatment plant and Nikiski LNG terminal might affect communities, wildlife, air and water quality and the other areas addressed in the 13 reports.

FERC, along with other state and federal agencies have already submitted comments to Alaska LNG on the first round of draft reports, and the sponsors' project teams are working to respond and incorporate those requests for additional information into the second round of drafts and, later, the final resource reports.

The public can see all of the reports, responses, letters and other filings at FERC by using the agency's [eLibrary docket search](#). Enter PF14-21 in the "Docket Number" box, then complete the range of search dates and click the "Submit" box at the bottom of the page.

Alaska LNG's current project schedule — subject to change — assumes a full application to FERC in the third quarter of 2016, with the agency issuing its draft EIS before the end of 2017 and a final EIS by fall 2018. That would put the project sponsors in a position to make a final investment decision late 2018 or 2019. Construction could start in 2019, with the first LNG cargoes to leave the Nikiski terminal by 2025.

That assumes favorable market conditions, no significant permitting delays, and resolution of several tax and partnership provisions between the North Slope producers and the state of Alaska. The state would hold a 25% interest in the LNG plant and perhaps a stake in the pipeline, too, depending on Alaska Gov. Bill Walker's request of the legislature that the state buy out TransCanada's share of the pipeline. The legislature will meet in special session starting Oct. 24 to consider the governor's request.

Kenai Spur Highway relocation meeting

Alaska LNG has scheduled a community meeting from 5 to 8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 19, at the Nikiski Recreation Center to discuss relocation of a portion of the Kenai Spur Highway at the proposed LNG plant site.

The existing highway cuts right through the proposed plant site, and Alaska LNG team members have been working with state Department of Transportation and Kenai Peninsula Borough officials about options to relocate the highway behind the plant site for safety and security.

Alaska LNG said it called the Oct. 19 meeting “to share information about the feasibility study, discuss key issues for consideration and, most importantly, encourage and receive community feedback on the process. Attendees will see a map of various options and will be encouraged to weigh in on the issues and options.”

The project sponsors would pay for the highway relocation, turning the new roadway over to the state upon completion.