

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 102 FERC ¶ 62,186  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Northern Natural Gas Company

Docket No. CP03-20-000

## ORDER GRANTING ABANDONMENT AUTHORIZATION

(Issued March 25, 2003)

On December 10, 2002, Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) filed an application under Section 7(b) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA) for authority to abandon certain pipeline facilities in Dodge County, Nebraska. Since Northern proposes to abandon facilities which are no longer needed, the requested authorization is required by the public convenience and necessity and is granted herein.

**PROPOSAL/DISCUSSION:**

Northern proposes to abandon a 4.5 mile segment of 16-inch pipeline, known as it's A-line, located in Dodge County, Nebraska. Northern states that the pipeline segment would be abandoned in place with the exception of approximately 310 feet, where the pipeline passes under the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and this section would be abandoned by removal. The segment of pipeline was placed in service in the early 1930's and authorized by the Commission in Northern's grandfather certificate.<sup>1</sup> Northern states that the reason for the proposed abandonment is to bypass an encroached area of the pipeline and to make way for the City of Fremont, Nebraska, to open up the western portion of the city to private development.

Northern states that the remaining portion of the A-line, along with its adjacent B-line, will be able to provide sufficient capacity to meet current contract obligations. The portion of the A-line proposed for abandonment has been providing service through a tie-over from the B-line near the Fremont Town Border Station since another segment of the A-line was cut and capped in 2001.<sup>2</sup> There are 10 farm taps currently located on the

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<sup>1</sup>See 3 FPC 967 (1943).

<sup>2</sup>See 95 FERC 62,027 (2001). Northern abandoned a 2,200 foot segment of the  
(continued...)

subject segment of the A-line to be abandoned, and Northern states that it will relocate these taps to the B-line. Therefore, Northern asserts that the proposed abandonment would not result in the abandonment of service to any of Northern's existing shippers and would not adversely affect the capacity of Northern's system or interfere with Northern's ability to meet its current contract obligations. The cost of abandoning the pipeline facilities is estimated at \$123,000.

### **INTERVENTIONS:**

After due notice by publication in the Federal Register on December 26, 2002, (67 Fed. Reg. 78799, no interventions to the application were filed. No protests or petitions to intervene in opposition have been filed.

### **ENVIRONMENT:**

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared for Northern's proposal. The EA addresses geology and soils; water resources; vegetation; wildlife; threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; land use; recreation; visual resources; recreation; polychlorinated byphenyols, air and noise quality; and alternatives.

Based on the discussion in the EA, if constructed in accordance with Northern's application and the supplements filed January 23, 2003, and March 14, 2003, and the conditions included in the appendix attached hereto, approval of this proposal would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

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<sup>2</sup>(...continued)

A-line in 2001 to avoid potential damage from landslides which were occurring in the area. At the same time, Northern replaced a segment of the B-line and constructed a tie-over from the A-line to the B-line under blanket certificate authority to ensure continuity of service.

**FINDINGS:**

At a hearing held on the date noted above, there was received and made a part of the record in this proceeding all evidence, including the application and exhibits thereto, submitted in support of the authorization sought herein.

Since the abandonment would eliminate an encroachment situation and minimize future right-of-way issues, and because no customers would lose service as a result of the abandonment, Northern's proposal is required by the public convenience and necessity.

This action is taken under 18 CFR §375.308, and it is ordered that:

- (A) Permission for and approval of the abandonment by Northern of the subject facilities, as described above and in the application, are granted, subject to compliance with Part 154 of the Regulations.
- (B) Northern shall notify the Commission of the effective date of the abandonment authorized in paragraph (A) above within 10 days thereof.
- (C) This order constitutes final agency action. Requests for rehearing by the Commission may be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of this order pursuant to 18 CFR §385.713.
- (D) Northern shall notify the Commission's environmental staff by telephone and/or facsimile of any environmental noncompliance identified by other Federal, state, or local agencies on the same day that such agency notifies Northern. Northern shall file written confirmation of such notification with the Secretary of the Commission within 24 hours.

William L. Zoller  
Acting Director  
Division of Pipeline Certificates  
Office of Energy Projects

Appendix

Environmental Conditions

1. Northern shall follow the construction procedures and mitigation measures described in its application and supplements (including responses to staff data requests) and as identified in the EA, unless modified by this Order. Northern must:
  - a. request any modification to these procedures, measures, or conditions in a filing with the Secretary;
  - b. justify each modification relative to site-specific conditions;
  - c. explain how that modification provides an equal or greater level of environmental protection than the original measure; and
  - d. receive approval in writing from the Director of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP) **before using that modification.**
  
2. The Director of OEP has delegation authority to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of all environmental resources during abandonment activities associated with the project. This authority shall allow:
  - a. the modifications of conditions of this Order; and
  - b. the design and implementation of any additional measures deemed necessary (including stop work authority) to assure continued compliance with the intent of the environmental conditions as well as the avoidance or mitigation of adverse environmental impact resulting from project abandonment activities.