
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEPA PRE-FILING PROCESS RESULTS IN EFFICIENT COMMISSION AUTHORIZATION OF GREENBRIER PIPELINE PROJECT

Noting that current forecasts continue to project the need for additional infrastructure to meet growing energy demands in the South Atlantic Region, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission today authorized Greenbrier Pipeline Company, LLC (Greenbrier) to construct and operate the Greenbrier Pipeline Project. This will create a new natural gas pipeline company to enhance supply diversity and allow new competition to meet the energy needs of the region following the successful use of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Pre-filing Process, which enabled the Commission to approve the project in about nine months instead of a more typical 16 to 18 months.

Chairman Pat Wood, III commented: "The way in which the NEPA Pre-filing Process was used in this case proves its value. It did what it was supposed to do—effectively involve all stakeholders early on so that concerns can be clearly identified and dealt with. Resolving thorny issues up front avoids later delay and this in turn allows the Commission to be more responsive to market needs and gives the industry and customers a better project."

After substantive review, the Commission granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Greenbrier to construct a new, 279.4-mile-long, natural gas transmission system in West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina that is capable of transporting up to 600,000 dekatherms per day to customers in North Carolina and South Carolina. Greenbrier will construct a new pipeline that extends from east of Clendenin, West Virginia, through southwestern Virginia, to its terminus near Stem, North Carolina. The Commission affirmed the need for the project citing the strong market support by its customers.

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Greenbrier, using the NEPA Pre-filing Process, worked with stakeholders and Commission staff to address routing concerns before an application was filed at the Commission. This pre-filing work resulted in changes to more than 30 percent of the route, and it significantly helped to reduce routing concerns and stakeholder issues along portions of the route. The Commission approved the project's proposed route with several route variations and one major route alternative, the Eastern Mainline Alternative. The Commission also imposed 47 environmental conditions on the project that are designed to mitigate the impacts of the project addressed in the Greenbrier Pipeline Project Final Environmental Impact Statement. Many of the issues addressed by these conditions were also identified during the scoping process that began during the pre-filing stage of the proceeding.

The Commission's staff worked with stakeholders from September 2001 until the application was filed on July 3, 2002. During this time period, Commission staff conducted site visits, scoping, and interagency and stakeholder coordination. As a result of this pre-filing coordination with stakeholders, draft and final environmental impact statements (EIS) were issued on October 24, 2002, and February 28, 2003, respectively. The NEPA Pre-filing Process enabled the Commission's staff to prepare a final environmental impact statement (EIS) in about eight months after the application was filed in lieu of a typical time period of about 15 months.

The use of this process enabled the Commission to more rapidly respond to market needs. The Commission currently have three additional companies using the NEPA Pre-filing Process with facilities that consist of up to about 1980 miles of pipeline. Successful implementation of this process will enable environmental concerns to be properly addressed while fulfilling the infrastructure needs of the United States.

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