



PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Applicant:
Shauna Akers
Transcontinental Pipeline Company, LLC

Published: Feb. 11, 2022
Expires: March 12, 2026

Galveston District
Permit Application No. SWG-2025-00597

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Galveston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application for a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1344) **and** Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §403). The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the work described below:

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Houston, Texas 77056

AGENT: Louise Holley
Edge Engineering and Science
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WATERWAY AND LOCATION: The project would affect waters of the United States and navigable waters of the United States associated with the Laguna Madre and Gulf of America. The project is located within a 50-mile-long corridor that begins in the southeast corner of Jim Wells County, continues east through Brooks, Kleberg, and Kenedy Counties, crosses the Laguna Madre and Padre Island National Seashore, and terminates approximately 3.5 miles offshore in the Gulf of America. The approximate center point is at Latitude 27.1540579 and Longitude -97.707449; in Sarita, Kenedy County, Texas.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: Proposed activities would occur across four geographic segments: 1) Onshore; 2) Laguna Madre; 3) Padre Island National Seashore (PINS); and 4) Offshore. The onshore segment consists primarily of uplands dominated by herbaceous and scrub/shrub vegetation with some palustrine emergent (PEM) wetlands. Estuarine emergent (EEM) wetlands border the Laguna Madre. The onshore segment also includes unvegetated habitats such as sand and sand dunes. Species observed in PEM wetlands include common rush (*Juncus effusus*), dwarf spikerush (*Eleocharis parvula*), gulf cordgrass (*Spartina spartinae*), saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), eastern baccharis (*Baccharis halimifolia*), saltgrass (*Distichlis*

spicata), gulfdune paspalum (*Paspalum monostachyum*), seashore dropseed (*Sporobolus virginicus*), bractless brookweed (*Samolus ebracteatus*), shore grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*), common three-square bulrush (*Schoenoplectus pungens*), and turtleweed (*Batis maritima*). Species observed in EEM wetlands include turtleweed, gulf cordgrass, dwarf saltwort (*Salicornia bigelovii*), and Virginia glasswort (*Salicornia depressa*). The Laguna Madre segment consist of a coastal lagoon between the Texas mainland and Padre Island. Habitat includes seagrass and soft bottom open water. Submerged aquatic vegetation identified in the Laguna Madre includes shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*), Widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*) and star grass (*Halophila engelmannii*). Dead *Sargassum* spp. was also observed during seagrass surveys. In the PINS segment, habitat consists primarily of upland sand dunes, as well as EEM and PEM wetlands. Identified PEM vegetation includes saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), gulfdune paspalum (*Paspalum monostachyum*), starrush whitetop (*Conoclinium betonicifolium*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), bushy seaside tansy (*Borrchia frutescens*), and common three-square (*Schoenoplectus pungens*). Identified EEM vegetation includes turtleweed (*Batis maritima*) and dwarf saltwort (*Salicornia bigelovii*). Habitat in the offshore segment includes drift algae (*Sargassum*), soft bottom habitat, and sand/shell bottom.

PROJECT PURPOSE:

Basic: Decommissioning of a pipeline.

Overall: Decommissioning of the North Padre Island Lateral Pipeline (NPI Lateral).

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant requests authorization to decommission a 24-inch natural gas pipeline through a combination of removal and decommissioning in place. Abandonment activities would include the removal of associated appurtenances, including mainline valves, pipeline markers, radio equipment, and above grade cathodic protection equipment.

A majority of the onshore segment of the NPI Lateral would be decommissioned in place, except for some private properties, transportation crossings, and sensitive habitats. In areas where the pipeline would be decommissioned in place, the applicant would excavate on either side of each segment to be decommissioned, cut the pipe, and fill it with nitrogen or water. Casing may be filled with grout. Removal in onshore areas would involve open cut excavation, removal of the pipe, and backfill, and compaction. Excavated soils would be stockpiled along the Right-of-Way and returned to the trench after pipeline removal.

In the Laguna Madre segment, the pipeline would be decommissioned by removal, except where the pipeline would be decommissioned in place in sensitive habitat areas, such as seagrass beds and spoil islands near the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, or where constructability is constrained nearshore. A barge-mounted dredge would be used to excavate sediments to expose the pipeline. Sediments would be placed in spoil storage areas alongside the trench. The pipe would be removed from the

trench using a barge-mounted crane ("cut and remove" method), or pipelay equipment ("reverse lay" method) on the working barge. Following removal, the pipe would be cut into segments, loaded onto a materials barge, and transported off-site for disposal. Following removal, a dredge barge would be used to backfill the trench with excavated sediment, and areas would be restored to pre-construction contours to the extent practicable.

In the PINS segment, the pipeline would be decommissioned in place, consistent with National Park Service recommendations. There are no above-ground facilities or appurtenances along the PINS segment; however, pipeline markers would be removed as part of land-based decommissioning activities. Methods would be similar to those used to decommission the onshore segment of the pipeline.

The offshore segment would be decommissioned by removal, except for approximately 0.25 mile of pipe in nearshore areas where constructability constraints limit the applicant's ability to safely remove the pipe near sensitive habitat on PINS. A barge would be mounted with high-pressure water jet sleds and pulled along the seafloor behind the pipe-laying barge. The water jets would be directed downward to disperse sediments, exposing the pipe for removal. Following pipe exposure, the pipe would be cut into segments, loaded onto a barge, and transported off-site for disposal. The trench would be allowed to revert to pre-project conditions naturally as sediments settle.

Prior to commencement of project activities, the applicant would clean the pipeline using unfiltered seawater drawn through a screened pump intake. Water and any pipeline liquids would be filtered to below applicable regulatory thresholds for pollutants before being released into the Gulf of America, in accordance with applicable permits. The applicant would implement on-site sampling measures prior to cutting the pipe to ensure decommissioning activities would not introduce contaminants to the environment.

Project activities would result in temporary impacts to approximately 0.41 acres of estuarine emergent wetlands, 77.89 acres of estuarine open water, and 119.83 acres of marine open water. Impacts are associated with matting, excavation, dredging, and temporary discharge.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has provided the following information in support of efforts to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the aquatic environment: Estuarine emergent wetlands crossed by the access roads onshore would be matted to avoid impacts. Erosion control devices would be placed along the workspace where there are waterbodies or wetlands nearby to prevent runoff and erosion from abandonment activities. In the Laguna madre, spoil would be stored adjacent to the trench and would be returned to the trench following pipeline removal. The Laguna Madre contains seagrass and submerged rock habitat that would be avoided during abandonment to the maximum extent possible. In the Gulf of America,

the applicant would allow excavated areas to backfill naturally from currents, wave movement, and associated sediment transport.

COMPENSATORY MITIGATION: The applicant has provided the following explanation why compensatory mitigation should not be required: The proposed project will not result in the permanent loss of wetlands or special aquatic sites.

LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has been identified as the lead federal agency for complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and (if needed) Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. As such, please direct all comments, questions, or concerns regarding these Acts to the FERC.

NAVIGATION: Based on the project plans provided by the applicant, the proposed activity will cross the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

SECTION 408: The applicant will not require permission under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 USC 408) because the activity, in whole or in part, would not alter, occupy, or use a Corps Civil Works project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: The proposed project triggered review under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) has reviewed this application under Section 401 of the CWA and in accordance with Title 30, Texas Administrative Code Section 279.1-13 to determine if the work would comply with State water quality standards. The applicant contacted RRC and initiated the Section 401 CWA process, on December 5, 2025. The RRC issued 401 water quality certification for the proposed project on February 4, 2026. If you have comments or questions on this proposed project's State water quality certification, please contact leslie.savage@rrc.state.tx.us. You may also find information on the Section 401 process here: <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-401/basic-information-cwa-section-401-certification>.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: The applicant has stated that the project is consistent with the Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with said Program. The Texas Railroad Commission has determined the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the CMP and reviewed this application under Section 401 of the CWA to determine the work would comply with State water quality standards.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program. The geographic extent of aquatic resources within the proposed project area that either are, or are presumed to be, within the Corps jurisdiction has not been verified by Corps personnel. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 41 sheets.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including cumulative impacts thereof; among these are conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people. Evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, EPA, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act or the criteria established under authority of Section 102(a) of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. A permit will be granted unless its issuance is found to be contrary to the public interest.

COMMENTS: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this determination, comments are used to assess impacts to endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

The Galveston District will receive written comments on the proposed work, as outlined above, until March 12, 2026. Comments should be submitted electronically via the Regulatory Request System (RRS) at <https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs> or to the Regulatory Division at swg_public_notice@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, Attention: **SWG-2025-00597**, at 5151 Flynn Parkway, Suite 306, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411. Please refer to the permit application number **SWG-2025-00597** in your comments.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing will be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.

DISTRICT ENGINEER
GALVESTON DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS