



Public Notice

**U.S. Army Corps
Of Engineers**

Galveston District

Permit Application No: _____

SWG-2016-01074

Date Issued: _____

March 21, 2017

Comments _____

Due: _____

April 20, 2017

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: To inform you of a proposal for work in which you might be interested. It is also to solicit your comments and information to better enable us to make a reasonable decision on factors affecting the public interest. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is not the entity proposing or performing the proposed work, nor has the Corps taken a position, in favor or against the proposed work.

AUTHORITY: This application will be reviewed pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

APPLICANT: Williams Gulf Coast Gathering Company, LLC
2200 Avenue A
Bay City, Texas 77414
Telephone: 713-215-4192
POC: Mr. Chad Alessi

AGENT: T Baker Smith, LLC
107 Global Circle
Lafayette, Louisiana 70503
Telephone: 337-735-2800
POC: Mr. Jude LeDoux

LOCATION: The proposed project is located Offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 21 miles east of Sarita, Kenedy County, Texas. The project involves a 24-mile portion of the Segment 5995 pipeline starting in North Padre Island (NPI) Block 902 and extending to NPI Block 956. The project also involves the entire length of Segment 6004, starting in NPI Block 956 and ending in NPI Block A-42.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE (NAD 83):

Segment 5995 Terminus Latitude: 26.914033 North; Longitude: 97.075686 West

Segment 6004 Terminus Latitude: 27.020883 North; Longitude: 96.795831 West

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant proposes to maintain in-service a 3.5-mile section of the 24-inch, Segment 5995 pipeline. This portion of the pipeline extends from the easternmost beach of Padre Island into the Gulf of Mexico to the 50 foot depth contour in Block 902. A valve is proposed to be installed at this location and the remaining 24-mile length of the pipeline is proposed to be decommissioned in-place. The applicant also proposes to decommission-in-place the entire 18.7 mile length of Segment 6004. Approximately 595 feet of this pipeline is currently exposed, but is proposed to be buried at the time of decommissioning. Installation of the valve on Segment 5995 and burying the exposed portion of Segment 6004 would result in the temporary displacement of approximately 0.07 acre of seafloor. The applicant has stated that temporarily displaced seafloor material would be allowed to naturally silt back to pre-existing conditions, and that no permanent impact to the seafloor is anticipated as a result of this activity. These pipeline segments were originally approved by the Department of the Army permit 15083 for the purpose of transporting offshore natural gas to onshore facilities, and installed by Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation in 1981. The applicant states that full removal of these pipeline segments would cause significant disturbance and ecological damage to the sea bottom and would introduce an unnecessary safety risk to personnel involved in removal operations.

In accordance with the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) 30 CFR 250.1750, pipeline decommissioning requirements, the applicant proposes to: 1.) disconnect from the previously serviced platform and subsea tie-in connection; 2.) flush by pigging and filling with seawater to equalize the line pressure; 3.) plug each end of the pipeline; and 4.) confirm depth of cover at the pipeline ends and cover endpoints with protective concrete mats.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION: The applicant has stated that they would avoid and minimize environmental impacts by decommissioning the cleaned pipeline in place, rather than removing it and causing disruption of the Gulf of Mexico seafloor and water column.

MITIGATION: No compensatory mitigation is proposed.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS: The existing pipeline is located below the seafloor of the Gulf of Mexico, at an average coverage depth of 5.3 feet for Segment 5995 and 8.3 feet for Segment 6004. Segment 5995 is approximately 25 to 104 feet below mean sea level, and Segment 6004 is approximately 104 to 212 feet below mean sea level.

NOTES: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This project information has not been verified by the Corps. The applicant's plans are enclosed in 7 sheets.

A preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Since permit assessment is a continuing process, this preliminary determination of EIS requirement will be changed if data or information brought forth in the coordination process is of a significant nature.

OTHER AGENCY AUTHORIZATIONS:

Consistency with the State of Texas Coastal Management Plan is required. The applicant has stated that the proposed activity complies with Texas' approved Coastal Management Program goals and policies and will be conducted in a manner consistent with said program.

No water quality certification is required.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES: The staff archaeologist has reviewed the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places, lists of properties determined eligible, and other sources of information. The following is current knowledge of the presence or absence of historic properties and the effects of the undertaking upon these properties:

The proposed work and/or structures are of such limited nature and scope that little likelihood exists for the proposed project to impinge upon a historic property, even if present within the affected area.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Preliminary indications are that no known threatened and/or endangered species or their critical habitat will be affected by the proposed work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on Essential Fish Habitat or federally managed fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW FACTORS: This application will be reviewed in accordance with 33 CFR 320-332, the Regulatory Programs of the Corps of Engineers, and other pertinent laws, regulations and executive orders. The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, 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: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps of Engineers 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 of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on 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 Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps of Engineers may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: The purpose of a public hearing is to solicit additional information to assist in the evaluation of the proposed project. Prior to the close of the comment period, any person may make a written request for a public hearing, setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine if the reasons identified for holding a public hearing are sufficient to warrant that a public hearing be held. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before **April 20, 2017**. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections.** Comments and requests for additional information should reference our file number, **SWG-2016-01074**, and should be submitted to:

Corpus Christi Field Office
Regulatory Division, CESWG-RD-CC
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
5151 Flynn Parkway, Suite 306
Corpus Christi, Texas 78411-4318
361-814-5847 Phone
swg_public_notice@usace.army.mil

DISTRICT ENGINEER
GALVESTON DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS