



# BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## New Mexico Products Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement

May 17, 2002

### Introduction

This newsletter is published to keep the lines of communication open during the New Mexico Products Pipeline (NMPP) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. This issue of our newsletter will address the following:

- ❖ the process for handling and considering comments received during the scoping period;
- ❖ the identified driving issues;
- ❖ the formation of a technical panel to assist in EIS preparation; and
- ❖ the schedule for upcoming elements of the EIS process.

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### Close of Scoping

The 60-day scoping period, which began on December 28, 2001, officially closed on March 3, 2002. Comments were gathered at five public scoping meetings as well as by mail.

Scoping meetings were held at the following locations:

**January 15, 2002**  
Moriarty, New Mexico

**January 16, 2002**  
Placitas, New Mexico

**January 17, 2002**  
Bloomfield, New Mexico

**January 22, 2002**  
Jal, New Mexico

**January 23, 2002**  
Odessa, Texas

A total of 199 people attended the scoping meetings, and 96 written comments were received. These comments have been summarized and compiled in a Public Scoping Comment Summary Report available for review at the Albuquerque Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

## Project Website

A project website has been developed to provide the public information about the proposed project and the EIS process. Please access the website through the New Mexico BLM website

<http://www.nm.blm.gov>

## EIS Process

Comments, received during public scoping meetings and by mail, highlighted a variety of issues and concerns relating to the proposed action.

Section 1501.7(a) 2 and 3 of the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations requires the lead agency (BLM) to:

“2. Determine the scope (Sec. 1508.25) and the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental impact statement.

3. Identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3), narrowing the discussion of these issues in the statement to a brief presentation of why they will not have a significant effect on the human environment or providing a reference to their coverage elsewhere.”

After reviewing the written and verbal scoping comments, the BLM Interdisciplinary team for this project met to discuss and determine the driving issues for this project. Issues were as having a potential risk or hazard. An issue may suggest different actions or alternatives. Issues

would influence a decision. In determining what is an issue, three questions were asked:

- Where is there a potential effect, risk or hazard?
- What may suggest different actions or alternatives?
- What may influence a decision?

The lead agency has determined that, at this time, the principal issues identified for further analysis for the NMPP EIS include:

- Safety
  - Leaks
  - Transportation – roads and highways
  - Pipeline age
  - System – pipeline design and monitoring
  - Location – proximity of residential areas
  - Emergency response capabilities
- Water contamination
  - Ground
  - Surface
- Noise
  - Truck traffic noise

There were other concerns raised as a part of the scoping. Those concerns will be addressed as mitigation measures, conditions or stipulations put in place in order to avoid or lessen impacts. They will also be addressed as performance standards that will be required as the framework of the EIS. As the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process progresses and further data is gathered, the list



of identified issues may be modified or expanded. The BLM will proceed with the process of identifying alternatives on the basis of these issues.

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### **Alternative Development**

The BLM Interdisciplinary Team is currently in the process of developing alternatives. According to NEPA, reasonable alternatives must minimize potential impacts, satisfy the stated purpose and need of the proposed action, may not be speculative or remote, and must be technically and economically feasible. The “proposed action” and the “no action” alternatives are required to be part of the analysis. An environmental analysis is conducted on reasonable alternatives developed through the EIS process.

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### **Technical Panel**

A Technical Panel of experts has been formed to assist the BLM in preparation of the New Mexico Products Pipeline EIS. The panel was formed in response to comments received from the public, local governments, and other groups during the official scoping period. The primary issue raised through scoping was safety concerns. The Technical Panel is specifically designed to address this issue by providing the BLM with additional expertise on pipeline safety and integrity.

The Technical Panel is comprised of four technical experts:

***Don Keyes***, Chief Engineer with the Anchorage Joint Pipeline Office, began work with the BLM in 1970 as a Field Engineer for preconstruction activities for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, and has since remained involved in Alaskan pipeline safety. Mr. Keyes provides the BLM valuable practical expertise in the area of environmental and safety compliance.

***Joe Dygas***, Technical Design and Review Specialist with the Anchorage Joint Pipeline Office, has worked in geology and physical sciences for the Federal Government since 1976. Mr. Dygas will advise the BLM on slope stability and other geologic safety concerns.

***David Rudland***, Principal Research Engineer with Engineering Mechanic Corporation of Columbus, has extensive experience in fatigue and fracture mechanics of pipeline engineering materials. Mr. Rudland will serve as the materials expert on the Technical Panel.

***Rodrick Seeley***, Director of the Southwest Region of the Office of Pipeline Safety will provide his expertise and experience to the Technical Panel.

The Technical Panel met April 23-25, 2002 in Albuquerque to discuss pipeline safety and risk factors associated with the New



Mexico Products Pipeline Project. The Panel will continue to meet and analyze data as the EIS process proceeds.

The next opportunity for public input will be after the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) this coming fall. A second series of public meetings will be held at this time. Comments received on the DEIS will be considered in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

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### **Tentative Schedule**

The next opportunity for public input in the NEPA process will be after the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) this coming fall. A second series of public meetings will be held at this time. Comments received on the DEIS will be considered in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Dates listed are tentative and may change throughout the course of the project.

Draft EIS	August 2002
DEIS comment period	Sept-Oct 2002
FEIS	Nov 2002
Record of Decision	Dec 2002

### **For More Information**

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