



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS
10B Airline Drive, Albany, New York 12235
518-457-8876 Fax 518-457-3087
www.agmkt.state.ny.us


Eliot Spitzer
Governor

Patrick Hooker
Commissioner

07-T-0998
Comments
09c
JEE
RECEIVED
PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION
EXEC-FILES-ALBANY
2007 AUG 24 PM 1:24

CASE #07-T- 0998 NOI; AGRICULTURE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To: Jaclyn A. Brilling, Secretary; NYS Department of Public Service, Albany

From:  Michael Saviola, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, Mt. Morris

Date: August 22, 2007

Subject: **Case 07-T-0998 Fortuna Energy, Inc. [FEI], Drumm J1 to Columbia A-5; proposed 6" natural gas gathering pipeline NOI; Town of Thurston; Steuben County; agricultural comments.**

The Department of Agriculture and Markets (Ag & Mkts) has conducted a review of the NOI for Case 07-T-0998 submitted by FEI, i.e., the proposed 6" Drumm J1 to Columbia A-5 natural gas gathering pipeline. On August 7, 2007, and prior to the filing of the NOI, Ag & Markets conducted a field review of the proposed pipeline located in active agricultural land. This review is based upon visual field observations from August 7, 2007, together with representatives of FEI, and a review of the NOI document prepared and submitted to the NYS Public Service Commission [PSC] by FEI.

Based on the site review, the proposed pipeline route crosses approximately 11,050 LF of active agricultural fields, largely comprised of permanent grass hay and cash crops. An additional 3,650 LF of abandoned agricultural fields (as determined by the Department) were identified along the proposed pipeline route. According to the USDA-SCS *Soil Survey of Steuben County, NY* (July 1978), the soil types in this region are of glacial origin; most along the proposed pipeline route having fragipans or impervious subsoil with significantly limited drainage capability.

Prior to pipeline installation, the topsoil layer on designated active agricultural portions of the proposed pipeline route will be "full width stripped" down to a depth of 12" (topsoil thickness to be determined in the field) and stockpiled along the edge of the right of way. The majority of the agricultural soils within the project site are Volusia which have very poor drainage characteristics. Due to this limitation, it will be necessary to install interceptor drain lines (4" to 6" dia. AASHTO M252 single wall drain line) in the pipe trench. Drain lines should be installed in accordance with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standard for "Subsurface Drain" (608). Outlet locations for each drain line will depend upon area topography and may tie into existing drain tile systems where feasible. In-trench drain lines will serve to remove excess water from the upper most portion of the soil profile. Due to excess soil wetness, additional subsurface drains may be required in various locations within

the right of way to address the accumulation of excess surface water. The need for additional subsurface drainage will be determined in the field in consultation with a Department (NYSDAM) representative during construction and will be monitored following restoration.

Following pipeline installation, the subsoil will be decompacted using a heavy-duty chisel plow or subsoiler, and rocks greater than 4-inches in diameter, uplifted to the surface as a result of the deep shattering will be "picked" from the right of way prior to topsoil replacement. Soil compaction shall be tested using an appropriate soil penetrometer other soil compaction measuring device. Soil compaction results obtained within the affected area will be compared with those obtained from the adjacent unaffected portion of the farm field or soil unit. Where representative soil density of the affected area exceeds the representative density of the unaffected areas, additional shattering of the soil profile will be performed using the appropriate equipment. Seeding, fertilizing and liming will follow Department's Recommendations¹.

Copies of this memo are being distributed to the parties identified below. It is requested that the Department of Public Service monitors and advises Ag & Markets and project staff regarding tentative schedules for construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the NOI for the proposed Drumm J1 to Columbia A-5 natural gas gathering pipeline. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (585) 658-9854 if there are any questions.

MJS/ms

cc: Eric Haskins, FEI
David Whedbee, FEI
John Strub, PSC, Albany
Jeff Parker, Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District
Matthew Brower, NYS Dept. of Ag. & Mkts., Albany

¹ **New York State Farmlands: Seeding, Fertilizing and Lime Recommendations for Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way Restoration In Farmlands.** NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Division of Agricultural Protection & Development Services. Albany, New York. Revised 6-15-2005.