

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

Gas Transmission Northwest, LLC

Docket No. CP21-29-000 & CP82-530-000

**PROTEST TO PROPOSED BLANKET CERTIFICATE ACTIVITY AND MOTION TO
INTERVENE**

Columbia Riverkeeper hereby protests the request filed by Gas Transmission Northwest, LLC to construct a new compressor station—the Coyote Springs Compressor Station in Morrow County, Oregon—under § 157.205(e) of the Commission’s regulations. Protestor seeks to have this request processed as a separate application.

Pursuant to Rule 214 of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure, Columbia Riverkeeper also timely moves to intervene in this proceeding.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in Washington with its headquarters in Hood River, Oregon. Riverkeeper has approximately 16,000 members and supporters in Oregon and Washington. Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. To achieve these objectives, Riverkeeper operates scientific, educational, and legal programs to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and human health throughout the Columbia River basin. As part of the international Waterkeeper Alliance, Riverkeeper shares a model of grassroots citizen involvement, a science-based approach to conservation and environmental protection, and a determination to enforce key environmental laws. Since at least

2005, Riverkeeper has been working to address climate change. Climate change poses serious threats to the Columbia River communities and the river's renowned salmon and steelhead populations. Ocean acidification, rising water temperatures, invasive warm-water species, and water shortages are examples of some of the climate change related impacts that threaten every population of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin. Riverkeeper focuses its climate work on challenging and preventing the construction of new fossil-fuel infrastructure in the Columbia River Basin to prevent the region from being locked into continued reliance on dirty, climate-polluting energy.

For nearly twenty years, Riverkeeper has invested considerable time, energy and money to prevent new fossil fuel infrastructure from being constructed in the Columbia River Basin. Among other things, Riverkeeper has regularly participated in legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings to prevent the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure and to reduce the climate impacts of the fossil fuel infrastructure already in place in the region. Riverkeeper is also a founding member and the fiscal sponsor of the Power Past Fracked Gas Campaign. Founded in 2018, the Power Past Fracked Gas coalition consists of twenty-seven organizations working together to protect the health and safety of Pacific Northwest communities and climate by accelerating an equitable transition off fossil fuels.

GROUND FOR PROTEST

In its request, GTN states that the purpose of its proposed new compressor station is to “alleviate delivery pressure” and to “provide operational reliability and flexibility.”¹ However, GTN fails to mention that this proposed compressor station is part of GTN's planned “GTN

¹ GTN Request for Prior Notice Authorization to Install Facilities Pursuant to Blanket Certificate, Document Accession # 20210113-5171 at 3 (filed Jan. 13, 2021).

XPress” expansion project. In November 2019, GTN announced its \$335 million GTN XPress project. According to GTN’s parent company, TC Pipelines LP, the “project will both increase the reliability of existing transportation service and provide up to 250,000 Dth/d of additional firm transportation service.”² GTN expects to provide this additional capacity by constructing the Coyote Springs Compressor Station, the subject of the current proceeding.

The blanket certification provided under 40 C.F.R. § 157.203 is meant encompass certain routine activities, set forth in §§ 157.208 – 157.218 of the rules. As evident in TC Pipelines’ investor calls, the construction of a new compressor station is more than just a routine activity—rather the compressor station is intended to expand the capacity of the pipeline to deliver more gas to more private companies. The GTN XPress expansion project is not about serving the public interest, it is about increasing the profits for TC Pipelines and its investors.

GTN’s expansion project is not in the public interest. Our society needs to significantly reduce its reliance on fossil fuels in order to slow the impacts of climate change. We need to be moving towards the development and use of renewable energy sources; not expanding fossil fuel infrastructure that will lock our region and our country into decades longer reliance on climate-killing fossil fuels. Last year, Oregon’s Governor issued an executive order directing state agencies to do everything in their power to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the state. In the Order, she recognized that “the world’s leading climate scientists, including those in the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, predict that [the] serious impacts of climate change will worsen if prompt action is not taken to curb emissions.”³ Our state is already seeing the effects of climate change, including increased temperatures, reduced snow pack, dryer summers,

² See GlobeNewswire, *TC Pipelines, LP announces GTN Xpress to enhance market access for growing WCSB supply and allow additional market penetration along GTN’s system* (Nov. 1, 2019), <https://bit.ly/3bXGQXG>.

³ State of Oregon, Office of the Governor, Exec. Order 20-04, *Directing State Agencies to Take Actions to Reduce and Regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions*, https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_20-04.pdf

and increased wildfires. These effects will continue to worsen if we do not rapidly reduce our dependence on fossil fuel use. GTN's pipeline expansion project is simply not in the public interest.

Neither the environmental information submitted by GTN nor the Environmental Assessment Report completed by FERC's Office of Energy Projects addresses the climate change impacts that will result from the increased capacity on the system. FERC should not treat the construction of this new compressor as routine; rather it should conduct a separate section 7 (15 U.S.C. §717f) review for both the compressor station and GTN's planned expansion project as a whole. In considering the public convenience and necessity of GTN's expansion project, FERC must balance the project's alleged public benefits against its adverse effects, including adverse environmental effects.⁴ FERC's review must include a complete environmental impact analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that considers the direct and indirect environmental effects of the project—including the downstream carbon emissions that the expanded pipeline capacity will create.⁵ FERC has the authority to deny a pipeline certificate if it determines that the pipeline would be too harmful to the environment.⁶ That Oregon has already issued an air permit does not substitute for a proper NEPA analysis that considers the greenhouse gas impacts of the pipeline.⁷

For these reasons, Riverkeeper opposes GTN's request to construct the Coyote Springs Compressor Station under the blanket certificate issued in Docket No. CP82-530-000. However, Riverkeeper reserves the right to take any position in this proceeding consistent with the goals of

⁴ See *Minisink Residents for Env'tl. Pres. & Safety v. FERC*, 762 F.3d 97, 101-02 (D.C. Cir. 2014); see also *Myersville Citizens for Rural Cmty. V. FERC*, 783 F.3d 1301, 1309 (D.C. Cir. 2015).

⁵ See *Sierra Club v. FERC*, 867 F.3d 1357, 1371 (D.C. Cir. 2017) (holding FERC should have considered the downstream carbon emissions that construction of a pipeline will make possible).

⁶ See *id.* at 1373.

⁷ See *id.* at 1375 (noting "the existence of permit requirements overseen by another federal agency or state permitting authority cannot substitute for a proper NEPA analysis").

protecting our organizational interests; the public interest; the fish, water quality, and recreational values of the Columbia River Basin; and the health and safety of its residents.

GROUND FOR INTERVENTION

Riverkeeper also timely moves to intervene in this proceeding. As explained in the foregoing section, Riverkeeper and its members have substantial interests in reducing climate change impacts in the Columbia River Basin. Because GTN's proposal to construct a new compressor station as part of an overall pipeline expansion plan may harm those interests, Riverkeeper "has or represents an interest that may be directly affected by the outcome of the proceeding" within the meaning of 18 C.F.R. § 385.214(b)(2)(ii). Since the reduction of climate change impacts in the Columbia River Basin is also in the public interest, Riverkeeper's intervention is also appropriate under 18 C.F.R. § 385.214(b)(2)(iii).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 385.203(b)(1)-(2), Riverkeeper states that the exact name of the movant is Columbia Riverkeeper, and the movant's principal place of business is 407 Portway Avenue, Suite 301, Hood River, OR 97031.

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 385.203(b)(3), Riverkeeper identifies the following person for service of correspondence and communications regarding this application:

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CONCLUSION

Riverkeeper respectfully requests that FERC grant this timely Protest to Proposed Blanket Activity and Motion to Intervene in GTN's request to construct the Coyote Springs Compressor Station.

Dated: March 21, 2021

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATION OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon each person designated on the official service list compiled by the Secretary in this proceeding.

Dated: March 21, 2021.



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Document Content(s)

Riverkeeper Protest and Intervention.PDF.....1