



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

2/15/2023

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:
Mail Code R-19J

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street N.E., Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Three Rivers Interconnection Project, Grundy County, Illinois, FERC Docket No. CP21-113-000, CEQ No. 20230008

Dear Ms. Bose:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the referenced Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), dated January 2023, which was prepared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Alliance Pipeline LLC (Alliance) is the project applicant. We are providing comments pursuant to our authorities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, and as a Cooperating Agency under 40 CFR Part 1501.8.

Alliance proposes to construct and operate approximately 2.9 miles of 20-inch-diameter natural gas transmission pipeline and associated facilities. The pipeline would connect Alliance's existing interstate natural gas transmission system with the Three Rivers Energy Center. EPA previously commented on this proposed project in letters dated October 14, 2021 (scoping), May 20, 2022 and June 2, 2022 (Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ADEIS)), July 29, 2022 (DEIS), and December 7, 2022 (Administrative Final EIS (AFEIS)). Based on our review of the FEIS, FERC did not adequately address our DEIS comments around calculating (1) upstream greenhouse gas emissions and (2) the social cost of greenhouse gases. Please find EPA's detailed comments enclosed. We recommend that FERC address our FEIS comments, and commit to mitigation measures described in the FEIS in the forthcoming Record of Decision (ROD).

Please send EPA an electronic copy of the forthcoming ROD when it becomes available. We welcome the opportunity to discuss any of our comments further. You may contact Mike Sedlacek, Region 5's lead reviewer for this project, at 312-886-1765 or sedlacek.michael@epa.gov, or you may contact me at 312-353-4293.

Sincerely,

Kathy Triantafillou
Acting NEPA Section Supervisor
Tribal and Multi-media Programs Office
Office of the Regional Administrator

Encl: EPA's Detailed Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Three Rivers Interconnection Project, Grundy County, Illinois, FERC Docket No. CP21-113-000, CEQ No. 20230008

EPA’s Detailed Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Three Rivers Interconnection Project, Grundy County, Illinois, FERC Docket No. CP21-113-000, CEQ No. 20230008

Calculating Greenhouse Gas Emissions

EPA appreciates that the DEIS and FEIS quantified construction and operational greenhouse gas (GHG) direct and downstream emissions. We also note that FERC included DEIS comments received in FEIS Appendix A; this included EPA’s DEIS comment letter with our upstream GHG estimates. Information provided to date does not demonstrate that FERC has considered upstream GHG estimates in their decision-making process related to GHG mitigation, as supported by CEQ’s final Phase I rulemaking relating to NEPA Implementing Regulations Revisions.¹ Federal agencies have a responsibility to include direct and indirect (e.g., upstream and downstream) emissions caused by production, processing, transportation, and consumption of the project’s resources.

Recommendation: In the ROD, document that FERC has considered upstream GHG emissions within their decision-making process. Include discussion of whether disclosing the full scope of direct and indirect GHG releases (including upstream) warrants more robust avoidance, minimization, or mitigation efforts.

Social Cost of Carbon

We appreciate FERC including a social costs of greenhouse gas emissions (SC-GHG) estimate in Section 4.9 of the FEIS. We note that the SC-GHG provided includes only downstream and direct GHG emissions.

Recommendation: In line with our DEIS comment, we recommend that FERC update the SC-GHG calculation presented in Section 4.9 of the FEIS to also include upstream GHG emissions. Include the updated SC-GHG calculation in the forthcoming ROD, as well as a discussion of whether disclosing the full scope of SC-GHG (including upstream) warrants more robust avoidance, minimization, or mitigation efforts.

¹ See CEQ NEPA Phase 1 Final Rule at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/04/20/2022-08288/national-environmental-policy-act-implementing-regulations-revisions>