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Gulfstream Natural Gas System Identifies Study Corridor in Florida: Seeks Public Input

HOUSTON -- The Coastal Corporation today announced that public input will be sought on a three-mile-wide study corridor for siting the proposed Gulfstream Natural Gas System, which is designed to deliver environmentally preferred energy to meet the increasing demand for electricity in central and eastern Florida.

David A. Arledge, chairman and chief executive officer, The Coastal Corporation, said: "Gulfstream is a top priority effort for our Company. We are doing all we can to ensure that its development proceeds in an environmentally responsible manner."

The study corridor for the pipeline begins in the vicinity of Piney Point in Manatee County and crosses the Florida Peninsula in an easterly direction through portions of Hardee, Polk, Highlands and Okeechobee counties, before ending near Fort Pierce in St. Lucie County.

The solicitation of early public comment is one of the steps being taken to develop the best possible route for Gulfstream.

The three-mile-wide study corridor reflects efforts to avoid sensitive environmental features, habitats, wetlands, parks, protected areas and public lands, and to minimize effects on developed areas.

At the same time, existing utility or road corridors will be shared wherever practical, thus minimizing potential environmental impact.

Gulfstream representatives have been meeting with a variety of environmental agencies and groups and will continue to seek and incorporate their suggestions as the project moves forward.

Further details on the study corridor will be available at Gulfstream's upcoming open houses, which are intended to provide informal, local forums to answer questions and obtain recommendations from landowners, local officials and other interested parties on the overall project and the study corridor.

Experts representing various disciplines involved in Gulfstream, including environmental, construction, engineering, land and safety, will participate in the open houses.

Specific locations and dates will be announced once the schedule is finalized.

Following the open houses and other local meetings, Gulfstream's proposed route will be adjusted and refined to reflect local concerns prior to filing the pipeline's formal application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) later this year.

"By making our proposed corridor known months before we file our pipeline certificate application, we are engaging in a voluntary collaborative process with the public, FERC staff and various agencies," said Jeffrey A. Connelly, senior vice president, natural gas, of The Coastal Corporation and president of ANR Pipeline Company, a subsidiary of Coastal and sponsor of the pipeline.

"This approach is in keeping with the spirit of FERC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, issued last fall, which is intended to improve communication, expand public participation and identify any concerns very early in the process," he added.

On March 1, 1999, Coastal announced that there was sufficient market support from nonaffiliated customers to proceed with the development of Gulfstream.

A subsequent open season, held from March 15, 1999, through March 29, 1999, attracted interest from additional potential customers.

Designed to help meet Florida's projected need to provide clean energy to service at least 9,600 megawatts of additional electric generating capacity by 2007, the Gulfstream Natural Gas System, L.L.C. has a targeted in-service date of June 2002.

It will consist of approximately 700 miles of pipeline and related facilities, originating near Mobile, Ala., and crossing the Gulf of Mexico in a southeasterly direction before making landfall in Florida.

Approximately 60 percent of the route will be constructed offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.

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