

The Recorder

IN THE COMMUNITY, ABOUT THE COMMUNITY, SINCE 1877.

2016-11-24 / Top News

Forest service adds new pipeline rules

MONTEREY — The U.S. Forest Service has added more requirements for Dominion to follow with respect to the company's proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

The new rules, filed last week with federal regulators, follow a list of more than 450 comments filed earlier this month.

One new requirement addresses soil management during construction.

The Upland Erosion Control, Revegetation, and Maintenance Plan provided by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requires topsoil segregation in "areas at the landowner's or land managing agency's request," USFS said.

The forest service explained that it requires segregation of all topsoil, regardless of depth, on all National Forest System lands that would be affected by the project. According to the Construction, Operation and Maintenance Plan, topsoil segregation would require an additional 10-foot-wide space in the construction right of way, resulting in a 135-foot-wide construction right of way. Because the project plan does not include topsoil segregation or the 135-footwide right of way along the entire length of the proposed route on forest service land, effects due to the segregation activity and extra width may not be analyzed in the environmental impact statement, forestry officials said.

"Activities implemented on NFS lands must be disclosed to the public and discussed in the EIS or a supplemental analysis, sufficient to support a decision on the proposed project," USFS explained. "

USFS asked Dominion to update its proposal to include topsoil segregation along the whole length through forest lands, and clarify whether that can be accomplished in the 125-foot right of way.

A second requirement refers to using herbicides on the proposed pipeline's right of way.

"If the project is approved, the forest service may require herbicide use along the permanent right of way to control non-native invasive plant species," USFS said. "The potential effects of the

herbicide use must be disclosed to the public and analyzed in the EIS or in a supplemental analysis.” It asked Dominion to update its plan to reflect this information.

“We request this information to ensure all potential project effects on NFS lands are identified, disclosed, and analyzed as early in the process as possible,” forest manager Clyde Thompson said. “Also, because the potential project effects occur on NFS lands (public lands), the public should be afforded ample opportunity to review and comment on the information.”

Additionally, on Monday, the forest service asked Dominion for detailed information regarding soil excavations and data. “We make this request to ensure adequate analysis of project effects on NFS lands and also to properly enter the data into our databases,” Thompson said.

— *John Bruce*