

SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

Tucson Mountain District, Arizona

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



El Paso Natural Gas Company's Proposal to Lower Several Segments of its Natural Gas Transmission Line No. 1008 within the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Park, West of the City of Tucson, Arizona

Project Scoping

April 15, 2010

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service (NPS) is currently reviewing a proposal from El Paso Natural Gas Company ("EPNG") to lower several segments of its natural gas transmission Line No. 1008 within the Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Park ("the Park"), west of the city of Tucson, Arizona.

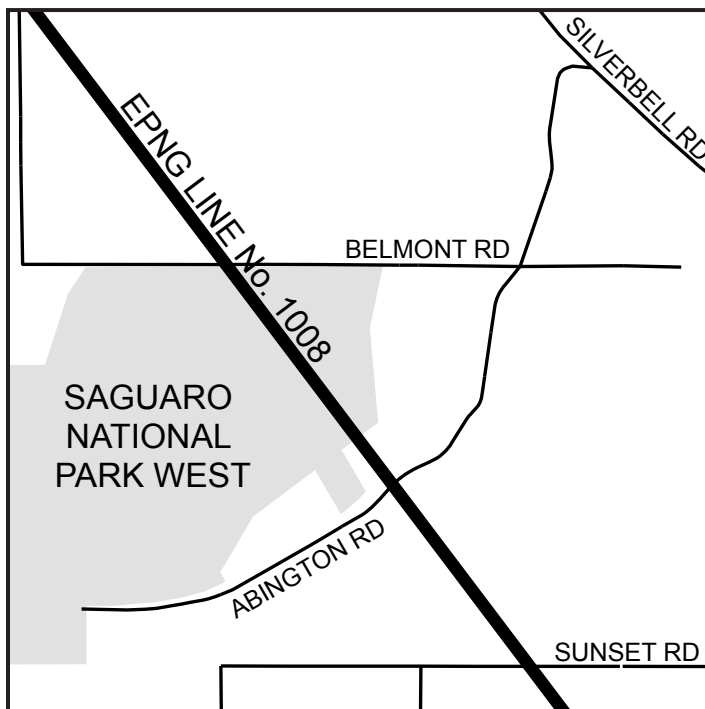
EPNG operates two high-pressure natural gas pipelines buried in a 30-foot-wide right-of-way (ROW) in the northeastern portion of the Park. During normal inspections, conducted pursuant to and in accordance with federal law, EPNG discovered four locations within the Park where Line No. 1008 has been exposed as the result of storm-water runoff. EPNG proposes to remove these exposed pipeline segments (totaling approximately 700') and replace them with new pipe, which will be buried at a depth that will ensure the continued integrity and safety of the pipeline. New fill dirt will be added where necessary to adequately cover the new pipeline, and the dirt will be compacted and graded. Water bars will be added to improve drainage and prevent future washouts, and the disturbed areas will be restored and re-vegetated to industry standards.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) considers reasonable alternatives to meet project objectives, 2) evaluates the impacts of the proposed project to the environment, and 3) identifies potential mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts.

NPS encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process. There will be two opportunities for the public to comment on the project: once during initial project scoping and again following release of the EA. We are currently in the scoping phase of this project, and I invite the public to voice their ideas, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Darla Sidles
Park Superintendent



ALTERNATIVES

The preliminary alternatives to be evaluated in the EA, including the proposed action, are as follows:

Alternative 1. No Action. "No-Action" means the project would not take place. This alternative represents the baseline against which to compare the proposed action and other alternatives.

Alternative 2. Proposed Action. Under the proposed action, EPNG would excavate, remove, and replace approximately 700 feet of pipe at four washout locations along Line No. 1008. Reclamation activities would include seeding, revegetation, and installation of water bars to prevent future erosion.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Project milestones include

- Public scoping period (closes May 15, 2010)
- Preparation of the Environmental Assessment
- Public review of the Environmental Assessment
- Analysis of public comments
- Preparation of decision document
- Announcement of decision

RESOURCES AND CONCERNS

Initial internal project scoping identified the following resources and other concerns for consideration in the EA:

Geology and Soils • Air Quality • Noise • Water Resources • Vegetation • Wildlife • Species of Special Concern • Invasive Species • Recreation • Visitor Use / Experience • Cultural • Energy

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Here are a few points to consider as you develop your comments on this proposal:

1. Do you have any ideas to share about the alternatives or resources and concerns, or are there any other issues/concerns that you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered?
3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for us to consider?

HOW DO I COMMENT ON THIS PROJECT?

Please submit your comments online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sagu>

Please provide all comments by May 15, 2010. If you wish to be added to or removed from the Park's mailing list for future correspondence, please indicate that in your response.

If you are unable to submit comments electronically through this website, you may submit written comments at the address on this letterhead, attention Meg Weesner. These comments will be considered during preparation of the EA. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Tucson, Arizona 85730

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