



TAPS Renewal EIS Newsletter

Volume 2

November 2001

Americans comment, renewal team listens

If you want to talk, we're going to listen.

This is the message that the Joint Pipeline Office's (JPO's) renewal team emphasized this summer and fall as it began work on its environmental impact statement (EIS) examining the renewal of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) right-of-way. The team — lead by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and assisted by Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff members and contractors from Argonne National Laboratory — offered the public various ways to provide input during its scoping period.

Scoping is one phase of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis process. It is intended to give interested parties the chance to comment on a proposed action and to offer suggestions about the issues that should be considered in the EIS analyses. Scoping was the earliest, but not the last, opportunity for people to offer their opinions about renewing the TAPS right-of-way. The comment period began July 31 and closed October 19, 2001.

The BLM and Argonne Laboratory representatives held public scoping meetings in Anchorage, Barrow, Delta Junction, Fairbanks, Glennallen, and Valdez in September and October. More than 100 individuals, interest groups, elected and appointed officials, Native corporations, organizations and villages, industry representatives, and professional and civic agencies attended the meetings. The project contractor offered several meeting formats, reflecting each community's desire — some favoring an informal open house, others a formal presentation.

In addition to the comments presented at public meetings, the renewal team also received comments by mail, e-mail, Internet, voice message, fax and tribal consultation (see article on page 3). More than 230 people and organizations submitted comments, and more than 1,700 people participated in the scoping process by providing

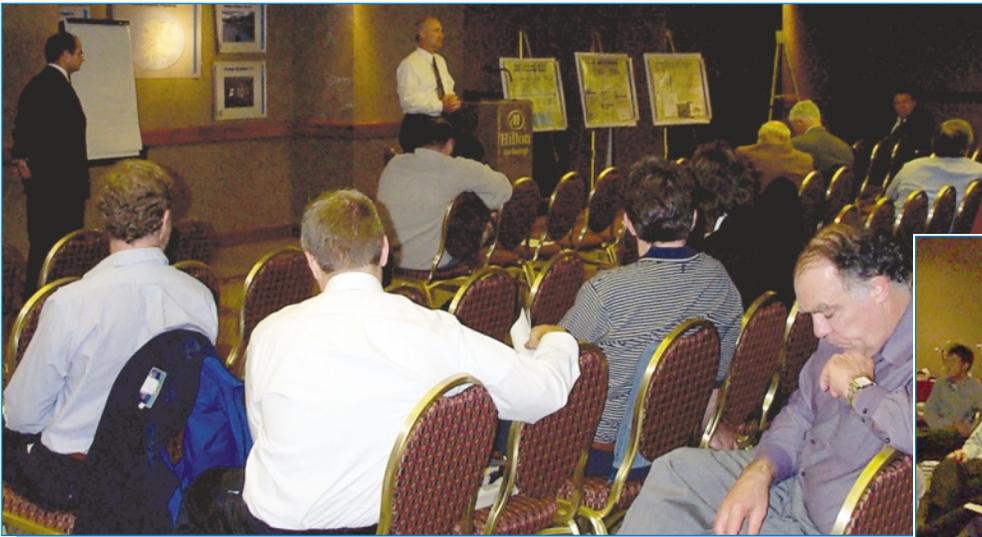
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TAPS Renewal EIS progresses

The Bureau of Land Management, in cooperation with the State of Alaska, is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze renewal of the Federal Agreement and Grant of right-of-way for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). Renewal could permit continued operation of the TAPS by its owner companies for up to 30 years beyond 2004, when the existing agreement expires.

The renewal process officially began on May 2, 2001, when the TAPS owners filed applications with BLM and the State of Alaska.

In June 2001, BLM awarded Argonne National Laboratory a contract to prepare the EIS. A draft EIS is currently scheduled for publication in July 2002 and will be available for public review and comment. The final EIS is due in November 2002, and a final decision on renewal is anticipated in December 2002.



TAPS Renewal EIS Public Scoping Meeting

comments, requesting information, attending public meetings, or visiting the TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site (tapseis.anl.gov). During the scoping period, 2,411 visits were made by 1,370 visitors to the web site.

Most commentors (53%) used the dedicated web site. Of the remaining comments, 15% were delivered orally at the public or tribal meetings; 11% were sent to the toll-free fax line; 9% were sent by regular mail; 7% by e-mail; 4% were hand delivered; and 1% were given over the toll-free telephone line. Just under half (48%) of the comments were from Alaskans.

The comments covered a broad spectrum of opinions, issues, and concerns about TAPS. Below is a sample of the comments we received.

- **Age and condition of the TAPS.** After a quarter century of use, some questioned the condition of the pipeline system and offered recommendations for steps needed to be taken to ensure that it operates safely into the future. Given the age of TAPS, some suggested that it be renewed for a period shorter than the maximum legally allowable renewal period of 30 years.
- **Environmental impact.** Some members of the public voiced concerns about TAPS' past and potential future environmental impacts, including those to air, water, wildlife, and habitat. These concerns included the potential for impacts from

catastrophic incidents and cumulative impacts associated with TAPS and encompassed measures that might minimize such impacts.

- **Social and economic impacts.** Commentors were concerned about TAPS' past impacts and potential future impacts on Alaska's society and on Alaska's and the nation's economies. Concerns were expressed about impacts on subsistence use of resources by residents along the pipeline, worker safety, public health, employment, government revenues, and the economic impacts to adjacent landowners and to the oil and related industries. Some suggested management steps BLM and DNR can take to lessen harmful impacts and enhance beneficial impacts.
- **Accountability.** Citizens discussed ideas of how future operations of TAPS can be more accountable to the government and the public. Ideas included additional audits, technical reviews, security measures, changes in the existing grant provisions, and new oversight panels or advisory groups.

To view the *Summary of Public Scoping Comments, Trans-Alaska Pipeline System Right-of-Way Renewal Environmental Impact Statement*, visit the TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site (<http://tapseis.anl.gov>) or obtain a copy of the summary by e-mailing a request to tapswebmaster@anl.gov or by contacting Rob McWhorter at 907-271-3664.

Consultation with Alaska Native Tribes

As part of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) renewal process, the Joint Pipeline Office (JPO) consulted with tribal governments and tribal leaders whose interests might be directly and substantially affected by renewing the TAPS right-of-way.

These government-to-government consultations were established under both State of Alaska and Federal orders. Although the consultations are separate from the scoping process and will continue throughout the TAPS environmental impact analysis process, comments received during the scoping period are included in the *Summary of Public Scoping Comments, Trans-Alaska Pipeline System Right-of-Way Renewal Environmental Impact Statement*.

In September and October 2001, the JPO Renewal Team and Argonne National Laboratory staff visited numerous Native communities and recorded comments and concerns about the TAPS. The comments were varied and far-reaching. The following reflect only a sampling of those comments:

- “In the past, before the pipeline, there used to be thousands of caribou in the area, and these animals were extremely important to village subsistence. Now there are very few, and villagers feel that the pipeline has caused this

change in geographic distribution. If important subsistence animals — moose and caribou — are affected by TAPS renewal, will Natives be compensated?”

- “There is a need for more youth employment — such as job shadowing — with Alyeska. Alyeska should come into the village to recruit young people.”
- “An oil spill in any of the local rivers would affect the entire river system.”
- “There were increased costs to local people during construction that never decreased; this has been particularly bad for people on fixed incomes.”
- “...the EIS scope should include the pipeline, the Valdez Terminal, and the shipping corridor through the Port of Valdez and Prince William Sound out to the 200 mile limit.”

Government-to-government consultations with Alaska Native Tribes will continue throughout the TAPS Renewal EIS process. Spud Williams is assigned as the Native Liaison for the renewal team. He can be contacted at 907/787-5557.



Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

TAPS renewal informational resources available

Want more information on TAPS renewal?

If you wish to learn more about TAPS and JPO's oversight of it, please visit the TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site at tapseis.anl.gov.

For even more information—including JPO reports on its monitoring of TAPS—the Joint Pipeline Office has established TAPS Renewal EIS reference document repositories at libraries in Anchorage, Barrow, Cordova, Fairbanks, Glennallen, Juneau, Valdez, and the United States Department of the Interior Library in Washington, D.C. This information is also available for review at BLM public rooms in Fairbanks and Glennallen.

The document repositories will remain available to the public, and documents will be added, throughout the entire renewal process.

Staying involved in the process

The Bureau of Land Management appreciates the participation and comments by the public during scoping and looks forward to additional public

involvement at the next stage in the EIS process. The next public comment period will be in the summer of 2002 after the draft environmental impact statement is published.

The TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site — tapseis.anl.gov — is the online public information and involvement center for the TAPS Renewal EIS. We welcome your ideas and feedback about the web site — just e-mail us at: tapswebmaster@anl.gov

To be placed on the mailing list to receive the TAPS Renewal EIS Newsletter by traditional mail, contact us at:

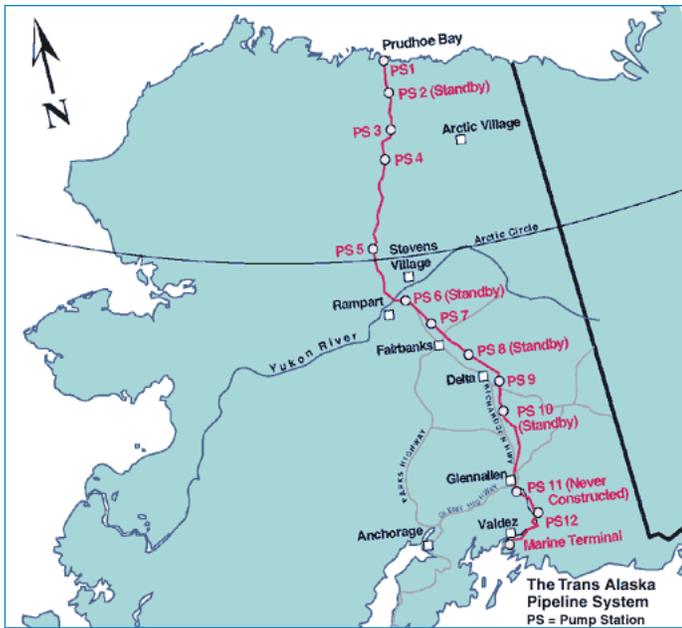
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For additional information, comments, or concerns call:

Rob McWhorter, Federal TAPS Renewal Coordinator, 907/271-3664;
Deborah Tennyson, State TAPS Renewal Coordinator, 907/271-4372;

Or write:

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Map of Alaska with pipeline route and pump station locations.

