



TAPS Renewal EIS Newsletter

Volume 3

June 2002

Renewing a pipeline right of way

The U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) continue working closely together as each analyzes and reports to the public on the positive and negative aspects of renewing the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) Right of Way (ROW). This joint process began on May 2, 2001 when the TAPS owners formally filed for the renewal. For BLM, the renewal application set in motion the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process of a full environmental impact statement. The state likewise entered into a formal renewal process.

TAPS was constructed from 1974 through 1977 on a ROW granted by federal, state and private landowners. The federal ROW expires in January 2004 and the state's ROW expires in May 2004. TAPS may be renewed up to an additional 30 years — the length of time requested by the TAPS owners.

To fully analyze the renewal request, the Bureau of Land Management is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Department of Natural Resources is preparing a Commissioner's Statement of Reasons and Written Determination (Commissioner's Determination). On July 5, 2002 each agency will release separate draft reports for public review, followed by public hearings and comment opportunities.

The Draft EIS

This past fall, BLM and the TAPS Renewal EIS contractor, Argonne National Laboratory, conducted public scoping meetings in six communities along the TAPS corridor. The comments from the meetings and a review of existing data and issues provided the framework for the Draft EIS (DEIS).

The DEIS describes the applicants' proposal (preferred alternative) plus two alternatives to that proposal; the affected environment; and the environmental consequences of each alternative, including a special examination of impacts on subsistence.

Renewal alternatives

The alternatives considered in the DEIS were:

- To renew the Federal Agreement and Grant of ROW (Grant) for TAPS for 30 years. Under this alternative, current operations would be authorized to

Draft copies available July 5

The Draft EIS (DEIS) and the ADNR Commissioner's Statement of Reasons and Written Determination (Commissioner's Determination) will be available in electronic and print formats at various locations beginning July 5.

- **DEIS** electronic copy: <http://tapseis.anl.gov> (will be available as downloadable and searchable pdf files or as a Compact Disc ordered via the web)
- Online **Commissioner's Determination**: <http://www.tapsrenewal.jpo.doi.gov>

Print versions of both documents are available for reading at:

Anchorage:

- Alaska Resources Library; 3150 C Street, Suite 100
- Anchorage Municipal Libraries
Z.J. Loussac Library, 3600 Denali
- Bureau of Land Management Public Room; 222 West 7th Avenue, #13
- DNR Public Information Center; 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1260

Barrow: Tuzzy Consortium Library

Cordova: Public Library

Fairbanks:

- Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library; 1215 Cowles Street
- Bureau of Land Management Public Room; 1150 University Avenue
- DNR Public Information Center; 3700 Airport Way

Glennallen: BLM Glennallen Field Office

Juneau: Alaska State Library

Valdez Public Library

Washington, D.C.:

Department of the Interior Library;
1849 C Street, NW

continue for 30 years. However, changes in the system would occur in response to federal and state requirements and to operational needs.

- To renew the Grant for less than 30 years. Under this alternative, the current operations would be authorized to continue for some period less than 30 years. However, changes in the system would occur in response to federal and state requirements and to operational needs. This alternative allows consideration of environmental impacts that may be time dependent whose effects could be influenced by the period of ROW renewal.
- To not renew the Grant. Under this alternative, the TAPS operations would cease at or before the end of the current grant. The BLM would require the TAPS owners to remove the TAPS and restore the TAPS ROW to a condition specified by the BLM. If this alternative were selected, the options for removing the TAPS and further Alaska North Slope oil field activities would require additional NEPA review.

Each alternative was examined in detail, without regard to preference, according to the NEPA. The potential major significant impacts of the alternatives are discussed in the DEIS. No renewal decisions will be made until after the public review is completed.

Reviewing the Draft EIS

The DEIS for the TAPS ROW Renewal will be available for public review starting July 5, 2002. The public will have 45 days, until 5 p.m. (ADT) August 20, 2002, to review and comment on the DEIS. All mailed comments must be post marked by August 20, 2002. A series of public hearings will be held in late July through mid-August (see adjacent sidebar).

The public has various options to comment on the DEIS. Any person or organization wishing to provide a comment is encouraged to use the Public Comment form on the TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site (<http://tapseis.anl.gov/involve/pubform.cfm>). Commenting via the Web is fast, easy, and helps ensure that your comment is processed rapidly and efficiently. File attachments in all major word processing formats and Adobe Acrobat PDF format can be submitted. You'll save time, postage, and printing costs by submitting your comment through the TAPS Renewal EIS Web Site.

BLM seeks comments on subsistence

The DEIS evaluates the impacts on subsistence of renewing the TAPS right of way for 30 years and for less than 30 years, and of not renewing the pipeline right of way. Evaluations and findings of these impacts (required by Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act — ANILCA — Section 810) for each alternative are addressed in the DEIS, Appendix E. Subsistence impacts in general are also discussed in the body of the DEIS.

BLM welcomes your comments on the subsistence analysis and is including the hearings required by ANILCA, Section 810 with the public comment meetings listed in the adjacent sidebar.

Joint Federal/State public hearing dates, locations

For public convenience, the BLM and the ADNR will offer joint public hearings for the TAPS Renewal DEIS, the State Commissioner's Determination, and ANILCA, Section 810 Subsistence. Comments can be made at one of the following locations:

- Friday, **July 26**, 7 p.m.: **Cordova**; Moose Lodge, 514 2nd St.
- Tuesday, **July 30**, 7 p.m.: **Valdez**; Valdez Convention and Civic Center, Ballroom 1, 110 Clifton Drive
- Wednesday, **July 31**, 7 p.m.: **Glennallen**; Copper River High School Auditorium, Mile 186, Glenn Highway
- Monday, **August 5**, 7 p.m.: **Anchorage**; Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Denali Room, 500 West Third Avenue
- Tuesday, **August 6**, 7 p.m.: **Fairbanks**; Chena River Convention Center, Conference Room/Main Hall A, 109 Clay Street
- Wednesday, **August 7**, 2 p.m.: **Minto**, Minto Lodge
- Friday, **August 9**, 7 p.m.: **Barrow**; Inupiat Heritage Center, multi-purpose room; 5421 Northstar Street (Inupiat translator available)

A court reporter will record the oral comments and prepare a verbatim transcript. All oral and written comments received by 5 p.m. (ADT) August 20, 2002 are treated equally and will be analyzed and considered in preparing the Final EIS. The Final EIS will contain written responses to DEIS comments. All mailed comments must be postmarked no later than August 20, 2002.

ADNR explains public process

The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources will release its Commissioner's Statement of Reasons and Written Determination (Commissioner's Determination) concurrently with the Draft EIS. The public can review and comment on the determination from July 5 through August 20, 2002.

The determination is available on-line at <http://www.tapsrenewal.jpo.doi.gov> or at the repository locations listed on page 1.

The State Pipeline Coordinator (SPC) is preparing a report to the Commissioner that addresses the lease-holders' compliance with the right-of-way lease and applicable state laws and regulations. This report will be used by the commissioner to evaluate lease renewal. The SPC's report will also be available at the same locations as the Commissioner's Determination.

How you can comment

Comments on the Commissioner's Determination will be accepted until 5 p.m. (ADT), August 20, 2002. Written comments can be submitted to:

- State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources/JPO
Attn: TAPS Renewal Team
411 West 4th Avenue, Suite 2c
Anchorage, AK 99501
- fax: 907-272-0690 (Attn: TAPS Renewal Team)
- e-mail: ADNR_Administrative_Record@jpo.doi.gov

The state will also take public comments at any of the seven combined ADNR/BLM public hearings scheduled for July and August (see sidebar on page 2). All comments must be received by 5 p.m. (ADT) August 20, 2002. Mailed comments must be postmarked no later than August 20, 2002.

Final determination

The written determination, or if revised, the revised written determination published by the commissioner, is the final administrative decision 30 days after the end of the public comment period, unless the commissioner, in writing, extends that 30-day period for a specified period of not more than 90 additional days to allow for a full consideration of received comments.

Final lease

The lease can be issued or renewed after the Commissioner's Determination becomes final.

Preparing your comments

Public review often generates several hundred letters and comments to review. Here are some suggestions to help make your comments clear and effective.

- **Be brief.** More of your comments can be recorded as you give them if there are not a lot of extra words between important statements. Reviewers are better able to respond to concerns that are well-organized and brief.
- **Be specific.** Clearly state what you want. A specific statement forces a direct response and is therefore more likely to produce results.
- **Explain your comment.** Support your opinions with facts or references.
- **Use your own words.** Writing an original letter requires more thought and effort than mailing a copy of a standardized letter.
- **Be honest and realistic.** Don't distort facts or repeat misstatements. Comments that are not legal or feasible may reduce the credibility of your comments.
- **Participate!** Your concerns will only be known if you speak up at meetings or send written comments. Letters or oral testimony are often the best way to ensure that your comments are recorded accurately.
- **Meet the deadline.** All comments received or postmarked by 5 p.m. (ADT) August 20, 2002 will be treated equally.



Trans-Alaska pipeline

How to comment on the Draft EIS

The public can comment on the DEIS through one of six ways with all methods of comment being treated equally:

- internet at: <http://tapseis.anl.gov/involve/pubform.cfm>
- toll-free voice mail: **1-866-542-5903**
- toll free fax: **1-866-542-5904**
- mail (must be postmarked no later than August 20, 2002):
BLM TAPS Renewal Scoping
ANL, EAD/900
9700 South Cass Avenue
Argonne, IL 60439
- hand deliver to BLM/JPO at 411 West 4th Ave., Suite 2; Anchorage, Alaska
- in person at one of seven public hearings (see sidebar on page 2 for hearing dates and locations).

The public comment period for the Draft EIS closes at 5 p.m. (Alaska Daylight Time) on August 20, 2002.

Life after the draft

The public comment period for the Draft EIS closes at

5 p.m. (ADT) on August 20. At this time, all comments received or postmarked by the deadline will be reviewed, analyzed and responded to in the Final EIS. Please note, this does not mean that reviewers will include every individual comment in the Final EIS, but instead may provide one response to a group of similar comments.

Additional steps in the TAPS Right-of-Way Renewal process are:

- **Revise EIS** — Based on comments it receives from the public, BLM will revise the DEIS.
- **Final EIS** — BLM will issue a Final EIS addressing comments received on the DEIS. As with the Draft, the Final EIS will be available on the web site, CD, and on paper.
- **Record of Decision** — After a 30-day waiting period following release of the Final EIS, BLM or the Dept. of the Interior will issue a final decision. The Record of Decision will also be published.
- **Final Grant** — The Final Grant can be issued at the same time as the Record of Decision or shortly thereafter.



Government-to-Government Consultations. The Joint Pipeline Office identified 21 Alaska Native Tribes that will be directly affected by the TAPS Right-of-Way Renewal and entered government-to-government consultations with them. John Krummel, Argonne National Laboratory, (top left) answers questions during a meeting in Fairbanks. BLM Native Liaison Spud Williams coordinated and participated in the meetings while John Shively, AFN participated in the meeting (images by Bob Moore).