

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

§ 2.1b

(J) Notices of conferences in docketed rulemaking proceedings.

(K) Proposed penalties under section 31 of the Federal Power Act.

(L) Such other notices or orders as may be submitted by the Secretary for publication.

(2) *Otherwise directed*, as referred to above, shall be interpreted to mean notice given by the discretion of the Secretary.

(b) After notice has been given, the service of formal documents issued in a proceeding shall be confined to the parties of record or their attorneys, and the mailing of information copies shall be confined to that which is required by the Commission's rules and regulations, by courtesy in response to written requests for copies, or by other considerations deemed valid by the Secretary in specific instances.

(Secs. 308, 309; 49 Stat. 858; 16 U.S.C. 825g, 825h; secs. 15, 16; 52 Stat. 829, 830; 15 U.S.C. 717n, 717o)

[Order 211, 24 FR 1345, Feb. 21, 1959, as amended by Order 463, 37 FR 28054, Dec. 20, 1972; 38 FR 3192, Feb. 2, 1973; 44 FR 34941, June 18, 1979; 45 FR 21224, Apr. 1, 1980; Order 541, 57 FR 21733, May 22, 1992; Order 603, 64 FR 26603, May 14, 1999; Order 2002, 68 FR 51115, Aug. 25, 2003]

§ 2.1a Public suggestions, comments, proposals on substantial prospective regulatory issues and problems.

(a) The Commission by this policy statement explicitly encourages the public, including those persons subject to regulation by the Commission, to submit suggestions, comments, or proposals concerning substantial prospective regulatory policy issues and problems, the resolution of which will have a substantial impact upon those regulated by the Commission or others affected by the Commission's activities. This policy is intended to serve as a means of advising the Commission on a timely basis of potential significant issues and problems which may come before it in the course of its activities and to permit the Commission an early opportunity to consider argument regarding policy questions and administrative reforms in a general context rather than in the course of individual proceedings.

(b) Upon receipt of suggestions, comments, or proposals pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the Commission shall review the matters raised and take whatever action is deemed necessary with respect to the filing, including, but not limited to, requesting further information from the filing party, the public, or the staff, or prescribing an informal public conference for initial discussion and consultation with the Commission, a Commissioner, or the Staff, concerning the matter(s) raised. In the absence of a notice of proposed rulemaking, any conferences or procedures undertaken pursuant to this section shall not be deemed by the Commission as meeting the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act with respect to notice of rulemakings, but are to be utilized by the Commission as initial discussions for advice as a means of determining the need for Commission action, investigation or study prior to the issuance of a notice of proposed rulemaking to the extent required by the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 553.

(c) [Reserved]

(d) A person may not invoke this policy as a means of advocating ex parte before the Commission a position in a proceeding pending at the Commission and any such filing will be rejected. Comments must relate to general conditions in industry or the public or policies or practices of the Commission which may need reform, review, or initial consideration by the Commission.

[Order No. 547, 41 FR 15004, Apr. 9, 1976, as amended by Order 225, 47 FR 19054, May 3, 1982]

§ 2.1b Availability in contested cases of information acquired by staff investigation.

Pursuant to the Commission's authority under the Natural Gas Act, particularly subsection (b) of section 8 thereof, and under the Federal Power Act, particularly subsection (b) of section 301 thereof, upon request by a party to the proceedings, or as required in conjunction with the presentation of a Commission staff case of staff's cross-examination of any other presentation therein, all relevant information acquired by Commission staff, including

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workpapers pursuant to any staff investigation conducted under sections 8, 10, or 14 of the Natural Gas Act, and sections 301, 304 or 307 of the Federal Power Act, shall, without further order of the Commission, be free from the restraints of said subsection (b) of section 8 of the Natural Gas Act, and subsection (b) of section 301 of the Federal Power Act, regarding the divulgence of information, with respect to any matter hereafter set for formal hearing.

[58 FR 38292, July 16, 1993]

§2.1c Policy statement on consultation with Indian tribes in Commission proceedings.

(a) The Commission recognizes the unique relationship between the United States and Indian tribes as defined by treaties, statutes, and judicial decisions. Indian tribes have various sovereign authorities, including the power to make and enforce laws, administer justice, and manage and control their lands and resources. Through several Executive Orders and a Presidential Memorandum, departments and agencies of the Executive Branch have been urged to consult with federally-recognized Indian tribes in a manner that recognizes the government-to-government relationship between these agencies and tribes. In essence, this means that consultation should involve direct contact between agencies and tribes and should recognize the status of the tribes as governmental sovereigns.

(b) The Commission acknowledges that, as an independent agency of the federal government, it has a trust responsibility to Indian tribes and this historic relationship requires it to adhere to certain fiduciary standards in its dealings with Indian tribes.

(c) The Commission will endeavor to work with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis, and will seek to address the effects of proposed projects on tribal rights and resources through consultation pursuant to the Commission's trust responsibility, the Federal Power Act, the Natural Gas Act, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, section 32 of the Public Utility Holding Company Act, the Interstate Commerce Act, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, section 106 of the National Historic Preserva-

tion Act, and in the Commission's environmental and decisional documents.

(d) As an independent regulatory agency, the Commission functions as a neutral, quasi-judicial body, rendering decisions on applications filed with it, and resolving issues among parties appearing before it, including Indian tribes. Therefore, the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act and the Commission's rules concerning off-the-record communications, as well as the nature of the Commission's licensing and certificating processes and of the Commission's review of jurisdictional rates, terms and conditions, place some limitations on the nature and type of consultation that the Commission may engage in with any party in a contested case. Nevertheless, the Commission will endeavor, to the extent authorized by law, to reduce procedural impediments to working directly and effectively with tribal governments.

(e) The Commission, in keeping with its trust responsibility, will assure that tribal concerns and interests are considered whenever the Commission's actions or decisions have the potential to adversely affect Indian tribes or Indian trust resources.

(f) The Commission will seek to engage tribes in high-level meetings to discuss general matters of importance, such as those that uniquely affect the tribes. Where appropriate, these meetings may be arranged for particular tribes, by region, or in some proceedings involving hydroelectric projects, by river basins.

(g) The Commission will strive to develop working relationships with tribes and will seek to establish procedures to educate Commission staff about tribal governments and cultures and to educate tribes about the Commission's various statutory functions and programs. To assist in this effort, the Commission is establishing the position of tribal liaison. The tribal liaison will provide a point of contact and a resource for tribes for any proceeding at the Commission.

(h) Concurrently with this policy statement, the Commission is issuing certain new regulations regarding the licensing of hydroelectric projects. In this connection, the Commission sets