

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION,

Petitioner,

Pursuant to WAC 480-93-020 for Approval to Operate a Proposed New 6-Inch Pipeline at a Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure of 400 Pounds per Square Inch Gauge within 100 Feet of an Existing Structure Not Owned by Cascade Natural Gas Corporation

DOCKET PG-190093

ORDER 01

ORDER GRANTING PETITION  
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On February 13, 2019, Cascade Natural Gas Corporation (Cascade or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition requesting approval to construct and operate a new 6-inch natural gas pipeline at a maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) of 400 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) within 100 feet of an existing structure not owned by Cascade (Petition).
  
- 2 The Commission has adopted the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, Part 192 and promulgated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapter 480-93 as the minimum standards for gas pipeline construction. WAC 480-93-020 requires a gas pipeline company to obtain approval from the Commission to operate a gas pipeline at greater than 250 psig within 100 hundred feet of any existing buildings not owned by the gas pipeline company.
  
- 3 In its Petition, Cascade explains that the US Navy plans to construct a facility at its Naval Air Station base in Oak Harbor that will require Cascade to relocate a 450-foot segment of 6-inch pipeline. As such, Cascade proposes to construct and operate a new 6-inch pipeline with an MAOP of 400 psig within 100 feet of one existing structure, approximately 450 feet of which will be installed using standard excavated trench. The complete route is depicted on the aerial map, titled Oak Harbor 6-inch HP Line Relocate – Project Route, which was included with the Company’s filing.

- 4 Commission Staff (Staff) reviewed the proposed proximity request and calculations. Because the facility will be new, there are no existing records. Staff notes the following facts:
- (a) The proposed MAOP of the new pipeline will be the same as the MAOP of the current pipeline, 400 psig.
  - (b) The proposed piping and all fittings are commensurate with the proposed MAOP.
  - (c) The proposed MAOP is commensurate with the current class location, which is Class 3.
  - (d) The new pipeline will be 45 feet from one building not owned by Cascade. All other buildings are greater than 100 feet from the pipeline.
  - (e) At the proposed MAOP of 400 psig, the maximum stress level of the pipe would be 9.1 percent of the specified minimum yield strength (SMYS). Pipelines that operate under 20 percent of SMYS are considered low-stress lines and pose a lower risk than pipelines operating above 20 percent of SMYS.
  - (f) The proposed pipeline and fittings will be pressure tested to a minimum of 750 psig in accordance with the Company's procedures prior to operation. This test pressure is at least 1.5 times the MAOP of the pipeline as required for a Class 3 location
- 5 Staff finds that Cascade's proposed construction meets all of the pertinent requirements of Title 49 CFR, Part 192 and WAC Chapter 480-93. Staff agrees with the Company that the selected location of the new pipeline has the least impact on surrounding population densities.
- 6 Staff recommends that the Commission approve Cascade's request to install and operate a 6-inch pipeline with an MAOP of 400 psig subject to the following conditions, which are designed to minimize the risks to public safety from the proposed pipeline:
- (a) For underground installations, Cascade must electrically inspect (jeep) the pipe coating and repair any coating defects in accordance with Cascade's operating standard prior to backfilling
  - (b) For underground installations, Cascade must apply backfill material around the pipe to protect the pipe and coating. The material around the pipe must be free of

any sharp rocks or other objects with a maximum particle size of one half inch and must contain a large percentage of fines, such as sand, native soil, or soil-based select materials.

- (c) Cascade must non-destructively test 100 percent of all welds. Cascade must remedy defects in the welds in accordance with Cascade's operating standards and procedures. Cascade must non-destructively test all repaired welds to ensure pipeline integrity and compliance with existing standards.
- (d) Cascade must install cathodic protection within 90 days after the pipeline is installed.
- (e) Cascade must provide notification to the Commission via email at least two business days prior to beginning project construction.

### **DISCUSSION**

7 The Commission agrees with Staff's analysis and adopts its recommendations. The Commission's primary objective in regulating natural gas pipelines is to protect public safety. Commission rules incorporate and exceed federal requirements, and provide flexibility to establish safety standards tailored to individual projects. The Commission's proximity rule, WAC 480-93-020, allows pipeline Staff the opportunity to review construction plans of high pressure pipelines in close proximity to inhabited structures to address safety considerations. Staff's recommended conditions described in paragraph 6 appropriately minimize the public safety risk associated with the proposed pipeline. Accordingly, we approve the Company's Petition subject to the conditions set out above.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 8 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to adopt and enforce rules for gas pipeline safety.
- 9 (2) Cascade is a gas pipeline company and subject to Commission jurisdiction.
- 10 (3) Cascade proposes to construct and maintain a new 6-inch pipeline with a MAOP of 400 psi within 100 feet of one existing building in Oak Harbor, Washington.
- 11 (4) The location Cascade has selected for the new pipeline has the least impact on surrounding population densities.

- 12 (5) Cascades construction plans indicate that the proposed pipeline meets or exceeds all of the pertinent requirements of Title 49 CFR, Part 192 and WAC Chapter 480-93.
- 13 (6) The selected location of the proposed new pipe has the least impact on the surrounding community.
- 14 (7) The conditions recommended by Staff add requirements to this installation – some of which exceed federal and state regulations – that minimize the added risk of the close proximity of the pipeline to a habitable structure
- 15 (8) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 28, 2019.
- 16 (9) The Commission determines that Cascade’s Petition to operate a new 6-inch natural gas pipeline at a MAOP of 400 psig within 100 feet of an existing structure not owned by Cascade in Oak Harbor, Washington, is consistent with the public interest, and approves it subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 6, above.

**ORDER**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 17 (1) The Commission grants Cascade Natural Gas Corporation’s petition to construct and operate a new 6-inch natural gas pipeline in Oak Harbor, Washington, at a maximum allowable operating pressure of 400 pounds per square inch gauge within 100 feet of an existing structure subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 6 of this Order.
- 18 (2) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and Cascade Natural Gas Corporation to effectuate the provisions of this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective February 28, 2019.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

DAVID W. DANNER, Chairman

ANN E. RENDAHL, Commissioner

JAY M. BALASBAS, Commissioner