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29
~~27~~ April 2010

Colin Jensen
Coordinator-General
The Department of Infrastructure and Planning
PO Box 15009
City East QLD 4002

Dear Colin

NORTHERN PIPELINE INTERCONNECTOR STAGE 2 – APPLICATION FOR EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF A PROPOSED CHANGE

As the proponent responsible for delivery of the Northern Pipeline Interconnector Stage 2, LinkWater Projects has identified an opportunity to provide an overall better environmental outcome by modifying the construction methods at waterway crossings. Accordingly, LinkWater Projects is applying to the Coordinator-General (CG) for an evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed change to a condition of approval to allow use of an alternative construction method at four waterways affected by the project.

This letter and the attached report is an application for an evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed change is made under s.35C of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The appropriate application fee is included with this letter.

Background

The attached report evaluates the environmental effects of a proposed change to the CG's Evaluation Report (specifically Condition 5) to include trenching as the construction method for four waterway crossings on the basis of improved environmental outcomes. The report also provides a basis for the selection of the trenching method against five agreed criteria and an assessment of the current status of these affected waterway crossings, to enable the CG to evaluate the merits of the request.

Southern Regional Water Pipeline Company Pty Ltd (trading as LinkWater Projects) ABN 91 117 898 74

The four subject waterways are:

- Paynter Creek Northern
- Petrie Creek
- Tuckers Creek
- North Maroochy River

Trenching as the preferred crossing method has significant advantages over other crossing methods. The key merits of trenching as opposed to either tunnel boring or piling are:

- Reduced vegetation clearing footprint, including reduced impact on important mapped riparian vegetation
- Smaller construction footprint and therefore less impact on the environment and affected landowners
- Significantly lower cost compared to piling or tunnel boring
- Reduced construction duration and reduced risk of exposure to significant rainfall/flood events during construction
- No long-term impacts on visual amenity as pipeline is underground

In order to minimise potential impacts throughout the construction period, sensitive area plans have been developed for the four waterways to guide and manage the works. Further, the Northern Network Alliance (NNA as the pipeline constructor) have developed a range of management plans and mitigation and monitoring plans to ensure no undue environmental harm occurs.

Affected Landowners

The proposed change will affect a number of landowners who own property adjacent to the four watercourses. Details for each landowner are listed below.

This list has been removed for privacy reasons.

Environmental Improvement Program

LinkWater Projects has committed to a range of environmental improvements through the publishing of the project Environmental Impact Statement and related conditions published in the CG's Evaluation Report for the project.

In addition, LinkWater Projects will commit to revegetate and/or rehabilitate areas beyond those that will be disturbed by the project in order to ensure that the approval to utilise the alternative construction method at the four waterways will result in an overall better environmental outcome. In particular, LinkWater Projects will commit to a voluntary financial or in-kind contribution of up to \$300,000 (including GST) to support these activities. Details of the activities are outlined below.

Partnership with Ecofund

Ecofund are currently working with LinkWater Projects to deliver watercourse offsets under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* for the clearing of approx 7 ha of vegetation along watercourses of various stream orders. Ecofund is currently identifying strategically located properties on the Sunshine Coast which contain watercourses and then will develop an offset proposal that entails the restoration and management of riparian vegetation along these watercourses as well as their protection on title. The total area of watercourse offsets are likely to be in the vicinity of 14ha (using a 1:2 ratio as a guide) and result in the improvement of water quality and riparian corridors within the same subregion of impacts from the project.

LinkWater Projects, in partnership with Ecofund, will liaise with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and SEQ Catchments to develop an additional and complimentary program for watercourse restoration. The program will be located within the same catchments as the project and there is potential to undertake complimentary actions on the offset properties to enhance watercourses and water quality. The program will also consider potential to fund the implementation of indirect offset measures (such as removing waterway barriers, in-stream restoration, land use management etc) to improve water quality and fish habitat values. The program will be developed over the next 3 months and implementation commenced within 12 months of receipt of the revised condition.

Timeframe

As the project manager, LinkWater Projects and the NNA are subjected to significant commitments to procurement (refer to Appendix C of the attached report for a justification of the program) that need to be made as the assessment and evaluation process follows through. By mid-May 2010, significant financial commitments will need to be made for the piling and tunnelling options.

For this reason, LinkWater Projects requests an interim decision by mid-May 2010 that will allow LinkWater Projects to direct the NNA to proceed with trenching as the preferred crossing methodology.

Please contact Mark Breiffuss, Infrastructure Planning Manager on (07) 3270 4029 or mark.breiffuss@linkwater.com.au should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Peter McManamon
CEO