

“(4) An opportunity for the oil pipeline to file a response for the record to an initial protest or complaint.

“(5) Identification of specific circumstances under which Commission staff may initiate a protest.

“(c) ADDITIONAL PROCEDURAL CHANGES.—In conducting the rulemaking proceeding to carry out subsection (a), the Commission shall identify and transmit to Congress any other procedural changes relating to oil pipeline rates which the Commission determines are necessary to avoid unnecessary regulatory costs and delays and for which additional legislative authority may be necessary.

“(d) WITHDRAWAL OF TARIFFS AND COMPLAINTS.—

“(1) WITHDRAWAL OF TARIFFS.—If an oil pipeline tariff which is filed under part I of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 1 et seq.] and which is subject to investigation is withdrawn—

“(A) any proceeding with respect to such tariff shall be terminated;

“(B) the previous tariff rate shall be reinstated; and

“(C) any amounts collected under the withdrawn tariff rate which are in excess of the previous tariff rate shall be refunded.

“(2) WITHDRAWAL OF COMPLAINTS.—If a complaint which is filed under section 13 of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 13] with respect to an oil pipeline tariff is withdrawn, any proceeding with respect to such complaint shall be terminated.

“(e) ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Commission shall establish appropriate alternative dispute resolution procedures, including required negotiations and voluntary arbitration, early in an oil pipeline rate proceeding as a method preferable to adjudication in resolving disputes relating to the rate. Any proposed rates derived from implementation of such procedures shall be considered by the Commission on an expedited basis for approval.

“SEC. 1803. PROTECTION OF CERTAIN EXISTING RATES.

“(a) RATES DEEMED JUST AND REASONABLE.—Except as provided in subsection (b)—

“(1) any rate in effect for the 365-day period ending on the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 24, 1992] shall be deemed to be just and reasonable (within the meaning of section 1(5) of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 1(5)]); and

“(2) any rate in effect on the 365th day preceding the date of such enactment shall be deemed to be just and reasonable (within the meaning of such section 1(5)) regardless of whether or not, with respect to such rate, a new rate has been filed with the Commission during such 365-day period;

if the rate in effect, as described in paragraph (1) or (2), has not been subject to protest, investigation, or complaint during such 365-day period.

“(b) CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES.—No person may file a complaint under section 13 of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 13] against a rate deemed to be just and reasonable under subsection (a) unless—

“(1) evidence is presented to the Commission which establishes that a substantial change has occurred after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 24, 1992]—

“(A) in the economic circumstances of the oil pipeline which were a basis for the rate; or

“(B) in the nature of the services provided which were a basis for the rate; or

“(2) the person filing the complaint was under a contractual prohibition against the filing of a complaint which was in effect on the date of enactment of this Act and had been in effect prior to January 1, 1991, provided that a complaint by a party bound by such prohibition is brought within 30 days after the expiration of such prohibition.

If the Commission determines pursuant to a proceeding instituted as a result of a complaint under section 13 of

the Interstate Commerce Act that the rate is not just and reasonable, the rate shall not be deemed to be just and reasonable. Any tariff reduction or refunds that may result as an outcome of such a complaint shall be prospective from the date of the filing of the complaint.

“(c) LIMITATION REGARDING UNDULY DISCRIMINATORY OR PREFERENTIAL TARIFFS.—Nothing in this section shall prohibit any aggrieved person from filing a complaint under section 13 or section 15(1) of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 13, 15(1)] challenging any tariff provision as unduly discriminatory or unduly preferential.

“SEC. 1804. DEFINITIONS.

“For the purposes of this title, the following definitions apply:

“(1) COMMISSION.—The term ‘Commission’ means the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and, unless the context requires otherwise, includes the Oil Pipeline Board and any other office or component of the Commission to which the functions and authority vested in the Commission under section 402(b) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7172(b)) are delegated.

“(2) OIL PIPELINE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term ‘oil pipeline’ means any common carrier (within the meaning of the Interstate Commerce Act [former 49 U.S.C. 1 et seq.]) which transports oil by pipeline subject to the functions and authority vested in the Commission under section 402(b) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7172(b)).

“(B) EXCEPTION.—The term ‘oil pipeline’ does not include the Trans-Alaska Pipeline authorized by the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act (43 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.) or any pipeline delivering oil directly or indirectly to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

“(3) OIL.—The term ‘oil’ has the same meaning as is given such term for purposes of the transfer of functions from the Interstate Commerce Commission to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under section 402(b) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7172(b)).

“(4) RATE.—The term ‘rate’ means all charges that an oil pipeline requires shippers to pay for transportation services.”

§ 7173. Initiation of rulemaking procedures before Commission

(a) Proposal of rules, regulations, and statements of policy of general applicability by Secretary and Commission

The Secretary and the Commission are authorized to propose rules, regulations, and statements of policy of general applicability with respect to any function within the jurisdiction of the Commission under section 7172 of this title.

(b) Consideration and final action on proposals of Secretary

The Commission shall have exclusive jurisdiction with respect to any proposal made under subsection (a) of this section, and shall consider and take final action on any proposal made by the Secretary under such subsection in an expeditious manner in accordance with such reasonable time limits as may be set by the Secretary for the completion of action by the Commission on any such proposal.

(c) Utilization of rulemaking procedures for establishment of rates and charges under Federal Power Act and Natural Gas Act

Any function described in section 7172 of this title which relates to the establishment of rates

and charges under the Federal Power Act [16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.] or the Natural Gas Act [15 U.S.C. 717 et seq.], may be conducted by rule-making procedures. Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the procedures in such a rulemaking proceeding shall assure full consideration of the issues and an opportunity for interested persons to present their views.

(d) Submission of written questions by interested persons

With respect to any rule or regulation promulgated by the Commission to establish rates and charges for the first sale of natural gas by a producer or gatherer to a natural gas pipeline under the Natural Gas Act [15 U.S.C. 717 et seq.], the Commission may afford any interested person a reasonable opportunity to submit written questions with respect to disputed issues of fact to other interested persons participating in the rulemaking proceedings. The Commission may establish a reasonable time for both the submission of questions and responses thereto.

(Pub. L. 95–91, title IV, § 403, Aug. 4, 1977, 91 Stat. 585.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Power Act, referred to in subsec. (c), is act June 10, 1920, ch. 285, 41 Stat. 1063, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 12 (§791a et seq.) of Title 16, Conservation. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 791a of Title 16 and Tables.

The Natural Gas Act, referred to in subsecs. (c) and (d), is act June 21, 1938, ch. 556, 52 Stat. 821, as amended, which is classified generally to chapter 15B (§717 et seq.) of Title 15, Commerce and Trade. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 717w of Title 15 and Tables.

§ 7174. Referral of other rulemaking proceedings to Commission

(a) Notification of Commission of proposed action; public comment

Except as provided in section 7173 of this title, whenever the Secretary proposes to prescribe rules, regulations, and statements of policy of general applicability in the exercise of any function which is transferred to the Secretary under section 7151 of this title or section 60501 of title 49, he shall notify the Commission of the proposed action. If the Commission, in its discretion, determines within such period as the Secretary may prescribe, that the proposed action may significantly affect any function within the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to section 7172(a)(1) and (c)(1) of this title and section 60502 of title 49, the Secretary shall immediately refer the matter to the Commission, which shall provide an opportunity for public comment.

(b) Recommendations of Commission; publication

Following such opportunity for public comment the Commission, after consultation with the Secretary, shall either—

- (1) concur in adoption of the rule or statement as proposed by the Secretary;
- (2) concur in adoption of the rule or statement only with such changes as it may recommend; or
- (3) recommend that the rule or statement not be adopted.

The Commission shall promptly publish its recommendations, adopted under this subsection, along with an explanation of the reason for its actions and an analysis of the major comments, criticisms, and alternatives offered during the comment period.

(c) Options of Secretary; final agency action

Following publication of the Commission's recommendations the Secretary shall have the option of—

- (1) issuing a final rule or statement in the form initially proposed by the Secretary if the Commission has concurred in such rule pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of this section;
- (2) issuing a final rule or statement in amended form so that the rule conforms in all respects with the changes proposed by the Commission if the Commission has concurred in such rule or statement pursuant to subsection (b)(2) of this section; or
- (3) ordering that the rule shall not be issued.

The action taken by the Secretary pursuant to this subsection shall constitute a final agency action for purposes of section 704 of title 5.

(Pub. L. 95–91, title IV, § 404, Aug. 4, 1977, 91 Stat. 586.)

CODIFICATION

In subsec. (a), “section 60501 of title 49” substituted for reference to section 306 of this Act, meaning section 306 of Pub. L. 95–91 [42 U.S.C. 7155], and “section 60502 of title 49” substituted for reference to section 402(b), meaning section 402(b) of Pub. L. 95–91 [42 U.S.C. 7172(b)] on authority of Pub. L. 103–272, §6(b), July 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 1378, the first section of which enacted subtitles II, III, and V to X of Title 49, Transportation.

§ 7175. Right of Secretary to intervene in Commission proceedings

The Secretary may as a matter of right intervene or otherwise participate in any proceeding before the Commission. The Secretary shall comply with rules of procedure of general applicability governing the timing of intervention or participation in such proceeding or activity and, upon intervening or participating therein, shall comply with rules of procedure of general applicability governing the conduct thereof. The intervention or participation of the Secretary in any proceeding or activity shall not affect the obligation of the Commission to assure procedure fairness to all participants.

(Pub. L. 95–91, title IV, § 405, Aug. 4, 1977, 91 Stat. 586.)

§ 7176. Reorganization

For the purposes of chapter 9 of title 5 the Commission shall be deemed to be an independent regulatory agency.

(Pub. L. 95–91, title IV, § 406, Aug. 4, 1977, 91 Stat. 586.)

§ 7177. Access to information

(a) The Secretary, each officer of the Department, and each Federal agency shall provide to the Commission, upon request, such existing information in the possession of the Department or other Federal agency as the Commission de-