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The Black Chronicle

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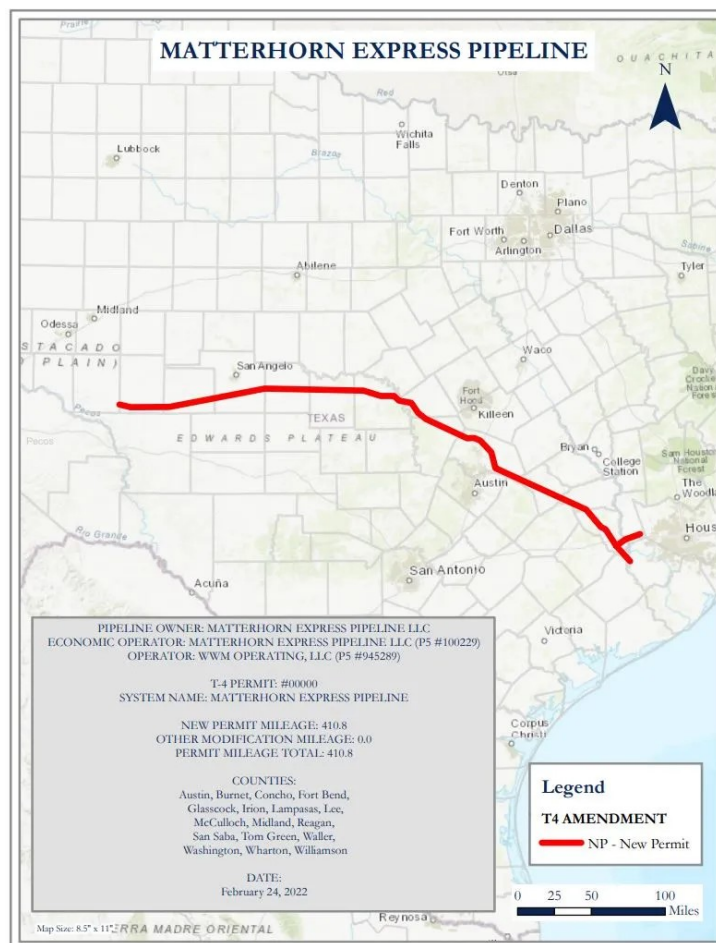
Matterhorn Express Pipeline project worries Central Texas landowner

May 19, 2022/The Black Chronicle News Service/No Comments



FLORENCE, Texas (KXAN) — A new oil and gas pipeline is coming to the Lone Star State and plans show part of it could run through Central Texas.

The more than 400-mile-long Matterhorn Express Pipeline will stretch across Texas and run through Travis, Williamson, Lampasas, Burnet and Lee counties. [WhiteWater Midstream](#) is the Austin-based company behind the project.



Matterhorn Express Pipeline Project Proposed Route

"The project will play a significant role in enhancing energy security, reducing energy costs, and mitigating emissions related to flaring by providing much-needed takeaway capacity for West Texas producers. This will ultimately expand markets for Texas energy and support Texas jobs," WhiteWater Midstream said in a statement.

It added, "We are committed to being good neighbors and incorporating feedback from all relevant stakeholders into both the proposed route and the project's overall design."

Still, some landowners are worried about what this pipeline project could mean for the future of their property.

The future of Panahi Ranch

David Panahi was sitting at home with his wife last Wednesday night when he got a knock on the door.

"About seven o'clock at night I hear a clanking on our door and then I go out," he said.

That Wednesday knock ended with Panahi being served a petition for a temporary restraining order and injunction relief.

"You get served on Wednesday and then the hearing is the next Thursday... was crazy," he added.

If the petition is granted, Panahi will have to allow his Florence land to be surveyed for the Matterhorn Express Pipeline that the Railroad Commission just approved a permit for at the end of March.



February 25, 2022

Railroad Commission of Texas
Pipeline Safety Section
PO Box 12967
Austin, TX 78711-2967

Re: WWM Midstream, LLC (P-5 945289); T-4 Pending Initial T-4 Filing

WWM Midstream, LLC requests a new permit be issued for the Matterhorn Express Pipeline. This system will be classified as a gas utility. The Matterhorn Express Pipeline is a future project and has not been permitted for construction at this time.

NP – 30", 36" and 42" 410.8 miles located in Austin, Burnet, Concho, Fort Bend, Glasscock, Irion, Lampasas, Lee, McCulloch, Midland, Reagan, San Saba, Tom Green, Waller, Washington, Wharton and Williamson Counties


	Miles
Beginning Miles	0
NP	+410.8
Total Miles T-4 pending	410.8

Thank you,

Shelli Myers
Regulatory Compliance Specialist
WhiteWater Midstream, LLC
100 Congress, Suite 2200
Austin, TX 78701
(281) 639-5423

Wayne Christian, Chairman
Christi Craddick, Commissioner
Jim Wright, Commissioner

Kari French, Director



RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OVERSIGHT AND SAFETY DIVISION - PIPELINE SAFETY
PIPELINE PERMITTING AND MAPPING SECTION

PERMIT TO OPERATE A PIPELINE IN TEXAS
03/28/2022

Permit Number: 10355
Commodity transported: Gas
Classification: Gas Utility
Payment Trace Number: 455RM007CNA2ZFB

WWM OPERATING, LLC
Attn: Caleb Ryan
100 Congress Ave.
Ste 2200
Austin, TX 78701

This is to certify that WWM OPERATING, LLC has complied with Railroad Commission rule 16 Tex. Admin. Code §3.70 governing pipelines in accordance with Texas Natural Resources Code, §81.051, and is granted this permit by the Commission to operate the following pipeline or pipelines located in the following county or counties:

AUSTIN, BURNET, CONCHO, FORT BEND, IRION, LAMPASAS, LEE, MCCULLOCH, REAGAN, SAN SABA, TOM GREEN, UPTON, WALLER, WASHINGTON, WILLIAMSON

Amendment Code	System Type	Texas Regulated	Miles
NP	T	Y	410.79

Total Permitted Miles: 410.79
Regulated Miles: 410.79
Unregulated Miles: 0.00

Pipeline Operator: WWM OPERATING, LLC
Economic Operator: MATTERHORN EXPRESS PIPELINE LLC
Pipeline Owner: Matterhorn Express Pipeline LLC

This permit is valid until 07/31/2023

If additional information is needed, please contact the Pipeline Permitting Section by phone at 512-463-7058, or by email at pops@rrc.texas.gov.

1701 NORTH CONGRESS AVENUE POST OFFICE BOX 12967 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2967 PHONE: 512/463-7058 FAX: 512/463-7319
TDD 800/735-2989 OR TDD 512/463-7284 AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER HTTP://WWW.RRC.TEXAS.GOV

Panahi bought the roughly 150 acres about a decade ago in the hopes of giving his dad a peaceful place to spend his retirement.

"My dad escaped Russian-controlled Azerbaijan, where over there you hear about things like 'the government seizes your land, pollutes the Caspian Sea,' all that," Panahi said. "One of my dad's dreams was to go live somewhere [in] his retirement... beautiful without pollution and all that. He was kind of pretty sad when I found out about all this pipeline business."

His goal is to keep the land as it is currently saying, "It's beautiful Hill Country views."

"It's over the Trinity Aquifer so, when we got that area they said, 'Hey, this is the best area — the Trinity Aquifer here in Burnet County — there's a creek there. It has a couple of ponds.' It was a really pretty area and, even though a lot of hard work, I didn't want anybody to make a mess out there so we even got the mineral rights out there," Panahi explained. "Not that we want to drill for gas, but I didn't want anybody to, like, ruin the area"

[Hill Country landowners deal with Permian Highway Pipeline drilling accident one year later](#)

[Now with the pipeline project in motion, Panahi is concerned about what the future of the land will be — beyond how the pipeline will affect the natural area and what will happen to property values.](#)

["The main thing, when we got that area, and my dad retired, we just wanted to keep it beautiful Hill Country and peaceful."](#)

[WhiteWater Midstream told KXAN "The Matterhorn project has been designed with careful consideration of the environment and the communities along the proposed route."](#)

[Panahi, who is also a dentist, said he planned to use the land as a donation-based wedding location, with proceeds funding his new nonprofit Smile Ministries to help Central Texans who cannot afford dental care.](#)

["Who is going to have a wedding if there's like, 'Caution, pipeline?'" he said.](#)

What rights do landowners have?

[Attorney Philip Hundl](#) who focuses on Eminent Domain Condemnation cases said landowners have options.

"Number one, take action. Don't disregard it," Hundl said. "First, getting legal representation from someone that understands eminent domain condemnation proceedings, that's important, but also just reaching out to the other lawyer on the other side, even you just the landowner, a non-lawyer and say, 'You know, I've got these papers and the date doesn't work for me. Give me more time, I'm looking for an attorney.' At least do that, because you've made contact, and hopefully the lawyers on the other side, for Matterhorn will take that into consideration, and be flexible and work with you on some dates, if that's necessary, ultimately."

Hundl said while he encourages people to find legal representation he understands not everyone can afford to. He said, in that case, people should educate themselves as much as they can online.

"Knowing more about the process, understanding the process, is going to give them a lot more comfort and reduce their stress level," Hundl said. "Emotions are high. So many of these properties that are being affected have been in families for generations, and now it's being affected. And landowners, their plans that they've had for these properties of building a home on this ideal homesite on the property, all of a sudden, they find out that's where the pipeline is going to go, or at least the proposed pipeline route. I mean, it's extremely emotional."

“ Why do we rely on pipelines?

The Deputy Director of the Energy Division at the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology Mark Shuster said there is a reason companies rely on pipelines versus transporting oil and gas via trucks and/or by train.

“At the highest level, they’re simply the most cost-effective, and the safest way to move, oil and gas from where the oil and gas are produced to where it’s going to be used or for the process or products,” he explained.

Shuster, who has decades of experience in the oil and gas industry, said there are over 2.4 million miles of natural gas pipelines in the U.S. and over 190,000 miles of onshore and offshore oil pipelines.

“The pipelines serve a very important purpose to be able to move these commodities, oil and gas, to where they’re going to be utilized,” Shuster said. “Particularly in Texas, there are 11.5 million barrels of oil that are produced across the U.S., but five million barrels are coming from the Permian Basin and that five million barrels of oil needs to go to refiners or petrochemical manufacturing facilities, along the Gulf Coast or elsewhere in Texas.”

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