



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration**

**Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant
Program**

FY23 Equipment Acquisition Tier 2 Environmental Assessment

NGDISM-FY23-EA-2024-01

PHMSA Approval:

**PHMSA Office of Planning and Analytics
Environmental Policy and Justice Division
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Overview:

The purpose of this Tier 2 Site Specific Environmental Assessment (Tier 2) is to: (1) document the proposed action (the Project) and the need for the action; (2) identify existing conditions; (3) assess the social, economic, and environmental effects using appropriate tools and agency coordination to comply with local, state, and federal environmental laws, regulations, and ordinances; (4) document applicable mitigation commitments that will avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential effects; and (5) seek comments from the public. This Tier 2 analysis informs the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) assessment as to whether the Project is consistent with the impacts described in the Tier 1 Nationwide Environmental Assessment for the Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program (NGDISM).¹

At the conclusion of the EA process, PHMSA will either issue a "Finding of No Significant Impact," further supplement this EA with additional analysis, mitigation measure, or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

I. Project Description/Proposed Action

Project Description/Proposed Action:

The provisional selectees identified in Table 1 are proposing to purchase various types of equipment as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 NGDISM grant program. The Proposed Action Alternative consists of purchasing equipment and does not involve ground disturbance or construction activities, although use of some equipment in the future would involve such activities. All equipment would be used by the non-profit municipality or community-owned utility (operator) to assist in repairing, rehabilitating, or replacing natural gas pipelines to reduce incidents and fatalities associated with natural gas distribution infrastructure and would also assist the operator in avoiding economic losses. The equipment could assist in improving an operator's leak detection system, address a risk that could lead to the unsafe operation of a system, and/or improve an operator's ability to locate difficult to find legacy pipelines. The following are the general types of equipment that would be purchased:

- Leak Detection Equipment (Odor Meters, Methane Detectors, Flame Packs, Ethane Detectors, Gas Sensors)
- Line Locators
- Electrofusion Processors
- Hydro excavation equipment
- Mobile compression/gas recovery equipment

Leak Detection Equipment

Leak detection equipment would be purchased, to include methane leak detectors, odor meters, flame packs, ethane detectors and gas sensors. Leak detection equipment allows operator personnel to quickly scan an area for suspected gas leaks and confirm gas lines are purged properly. The different types of leak

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/09/2022-24378/pipeline-safety-notice-of-availability-of-the-tier-1-nationwide-environmental-assessment-for-the>

detectors are based on the needs identified by each individual operator. This equipment can make it possible for operators to detect leaks in confined areas, or in larger unconfined areas without having to travel the entire length of their pipelines. Technicians could safely inspect busy streets and intersections, scan across or through fences, access backyards that are inaccessible due to fences or dogs, detect leaks which are venting away from the pipe, scan through windows when checking buildings without entering the gas plume, and investigate potential leaks in adverse weather conditions. A wearable gas sensor is a device that clips onto the clothing of a technician and continuously monitors for dangerous atmospheric conditions. These conditions include lack of oxygen, presence of carbon monoxide, percentage of lower explosive limits of methane, and explosive gasses. The Ethane detector allows the natural gas operator to determine if a detected methane leak is sourced from the natural gas pipeline or if it is the result of off-gassing from decomposition of biological material or from the sewer system.

Line Locators

A line locator is a tool used to locate underground utility lines and pipes. The purchase of a line locator will allow the operator to accurately mark underground facilities. This equipment will allow for improved accuracy to reduce the number of mislocates, which improves safety by reducing the number of hazardous leaks caused by third-party damage.

Electrofusion Processors

An electrofusion processor is a machine used to join pipe fittings by using a controlled electrical current to heat an element positioned inside a coupling, which then fuses to the pipe, creating a thermally bonded connection. It can be used for service installations and small diameter repairs. This equipment is beneficial as it does not require the operator to use complicated equipment and creates a homogeneous joint.

Hydro excavation equipment

Hydro excavation equipment, or hydrovacs, use high-pressure water to cut and liquefy the soil, while simultaneously using an industrial strength vacuum to remove the soil from the excavation. Both fresh water and soil from the excavation is contained in a typically truck mounted unit. The technology allows for quick and precise excavation, requiring less labor and backfill. Hydrovacs cause less environmental risk when excavating natural gas pipelines as there is very little threat to buried utilities.

Mobile compression/gas recovery equipment

Mobile compression or gas recovery equipment captures gasses or liquids which otherwise would be released during a rehabilitation or repair project. This equipment can move natural gas from one pressurized system through cross-compression to another system, allowing operators who have installed new pipeline to move the natural gas remaining in old lines over to the new pipeline system, preventing methane emissions often released during blowdown².

This equipment would help meet the goals of the NGDISM grant program by identifying high-risk/leak-prone pipes and enable operators to more readily prioritize and initiate gas pipeline repair, rehabilitation, or replacement that operators would otherwise be unable to accomplish. The equipment is capable of achieving productivity gains and reducing operations and maintenance costs and will also assist in reducing environmental and climate change impacts linked to emissions from leaks and maintenance activities. This type of equipment purchase provides safety benefits by reducing potential incidents and

² Blowdown refers to the venting of natural gas in current facilities, in order to begin rehabilitation, repair, or replacement activities.

fatalities and reducing overall methane emissions through locating existing lines and natural gas leaks and allowing for improved construction methods.

Table 1 FY23 Provisional Selectees-equipment purchases

Project Title	Applicant Location	Equipment Type
The City of Alexander City	Alexander City, AL	Leak detection equipment to include handheld multi-gas detectors, laser methane gas detectors, portable methane detectors, vehicle mounted methane detectors, and a calibration device
City of Alma	Alma, KS	Leak detection equipment and a pipe locator
Village of Bath FY 2023 NGDISM Grant Application	Bath, NY	Leak detection equipment to include multi gas detectors, methane gas detectors, vehicle mounted methane detectors
Remote Methane Laser Detection Equipment	Brownsville, TN	Leak detection equipment to include remote laser methane detectors
City of Chanute	Chanute, KS	Leak detection equipment to include remote methane leak detector equipment
Waterworks Sewer and Gas Board of City of Childersburg	Childersburg, AL	Leak detection equipment to include combustible gas indicator, laser methane detector, all-material locator, odor meters
Clearwater Gas System Infrastructure	Clearwater, FL	Leak detection equipment to include remote gas leak detectors
Cross Plains	Cross Plains, TX	Line locator
City of Jacksonville, Alabama	Jacksonville, AL	Leak detection and locator equipment to include combustible gas indicator, laser methane detector, and locator

		equipment
FY2023 NGDISM Grant - Moss Point (Project 5 of 8)	Moss Point, MS	Leak detection equipment to include vehicle methane detection system and ground penetrating radar
FY2023 NGDISM Grant - Moss Point (Project 8 of 8)	Moss Point, MS	Leak detection equipment to include mobile leak detection equipment, electrofusion processor, and locator equipment
City of Murray	Murray, KY	Leak detection equipment to include remote laser methane detector, and portable gas detectors
City of Palo Alto	Palo Alto, CA	Leak detection equipment to include remote laser leak detector and methane leak detectors
Paris-Henry County Public Utility District	Paris, TN	Leak detection equipment to include handheld gas sensors, wearable gas sensors, ethane detector, remote methane detector
City of Piedmont	Piedmont, AL	Leak detection equipment to include combustible gas indicator, laser methane detector, and all-material locator
Pikeville Natural Gas	Pikeville, TN	Leak detection equipment to include handheld leak detection devices
City of Safford	Safford, AZ	Leak detection equipment and supporting software to include portable methane detectors, hand-held laser remote gas leak detectors, gas detectors, vehicle mounted methane detectors

City of Huxley	Shelbyville, TX	Leak detection equipment, odorometers, line locators, and a hydro VAC
PHMSA Phase II Grant FY2023	Springfield, MO	Mobile compression equipment
City of Tallahassee NGDISM Grant Application	Tallahassee, FL	Leak detection equipment and pipeline locators
City of Wilson	Wilson, NC	ZEVAC Blowdown Recovery System
City of York	York, AL	Leak detection equipment
Gas Utility District 1 of East Baton Rouge Parish	Zachary, LA	Leak detection equipment and ZEVAC Blowdown Recovery System

No Action:

The No Action Alternative, as required under NEPA, serves as a baseline and is used to compare impacts resulting from the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, PHMSA would not fund these equipment acquisition projects. Operators would not be able to acquire the equipment at this time and therefore would rely on their current methane detection equipment, use construction methods such as open trenching, and use blowdown methods (versus capturing methane) during pipeline conversion.

Need for the Project:

The purpose of the project is to aid operators in reducing incidents and fatalities associated with natural gas distribution infrastructure as well as reduce environmental and climate change impacts linked to emissions from leaks and maintenance activities. Specifically, purchase of the equipment is needed to assist in: improving safety by finding and allowing leaks to be addressed sooner (leak detection); locating lines to avoid accidental damage to pipelines and locating pipelines for needed maintenance and repair (line locators); and improving construction methods (electrofusion processor, hydro excavation, mobile compression/gas recovery). The safety risk profile is enhanced by increasing safety of employees and the public, which will result in a more timely and accurate ability to locate and address natural gas emissions, both above ground and below ground, during normal operations and emergency situations.

Equipment-Only Projects:

Yes

Description of the Environmental Setting of the Project Area:

The Proposed Action Alternative is for equipment purchases only and does not involve construction activities and will not include any physical impacts or alterations that could directly impact the human or natural environment.



II. Resource Review

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases (GHG)
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The acquisition of equipment would have no direct effect on air quality or greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; however, the use of the equipment could reduce overall GHG emissions. The leak detection equipment will assist in identifying leaks, thus creating a safer survey in areas that may be difficult to reach, such as busy roadways, fenced-off areas, and other places that are hard to access. Line locators will assist the operators in identifying lines where ground disturbing activities are proposed so these areas can be avoided, eliminating accidental ruptures. Line locators will also assist in accurately identifying natural gas pipelines that need to be repaired or replaced. Electrofusion processors create successful pipe connections, reducing the risk of joint leaks. Hydro excavation equipment allows for pipeline excavation using water, reducing the risk of accidental rupture with traditional excavation equipment like backhoes. Finally, mobile compression/gas recovery equipment can capture gas, eliminating the need for blowdown and reducing overall methane emissions. While the use of the equipment assists in identifying leaks and repairing pipelines, the specific location(s) and the actual repair work is unknown, would occur in the future, and is outside the scope of this project. All of the equipment that would be acquired is anticipated to be used for years into the future and the extent of the use is speculative. The potential for cumulative impacts to air quality and GHG would be directly related to the nature and scope of the repair work, the type of equipment used to repair the leaks, and how long the repair work would take. While the extent of potential impacts of future repair work is speculative, as discussed in the "Tier 1 Nationwide Environmental Analysis for the PHMSA: Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment", maintenance and repair activities are unlikely to cause a significant increase in GHG emissions or significantly contribute to climate change. It is PHMSA's assessment that there is no direct effect on air quality, but it is anticipated that indirect and cumulative effects of the purchase of equipment would have a beneficial impact to air quality.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures:</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required for the acquisition of equipment as no direct impacts would occur.</p>

Water Resources
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The acquisition of equipment would have no direct impact on water resources. While the use of some equipment would involve ground disturbing activities, the specific location(s) and the scope of the work is unknown, would occur in the future and is outside the scope of this equipment purchase. The leak detection equipment, line locators, and electrofusion processors would have no indirect effect on water resources as there is no ground disturbance involved with this type of equipment. Mobile compression/gas recovery equipment captures gas and should have no impact on water resources, but the staging of this equipment for use could have minor impacts if not set up properly. The use of hydro excavation equipment has the greatest potential for indirect impacts on water resources. As stated previously, the location and</p>

scope of when and where this type of equipment could be used is speculative, but where water resources may be present, i.e., wetlands, streams, etc., indirect impacts could occur if hydro excavation takes place in open waters, streams, wetlands or other aquatic areas. Additionally, should equipment fail, or if best management practices are not employed, indirect effects, such as turbidity in streams, or migrating sediments and slurry could enter adjacent aquatic areas. However, it is incumbent upon operators to use best management practices, maintain equipment in proper working conditions and exert discretion in sensitive areas, such as wetlands, and avoid these areas, if possible, which would reduce or eliminate the potential for indirect impacts. Should operators identify that work would directly impact a water resource, authorization from the US Army Corps of Engineers would likely be required and subsequent authorizations or permits would include applicable special conditions or mitigation measures, if necessary for the specific work. However, because work would be considered maintenance and repair, it is anticipated all impacts would be temporary and all areas would be restored to original condition. If leaks are detected in portions of the system that fall within wetlands, waters, coastal zones, or floodplains, operators will coordinate any repair work that could impact water resources with the appropriate local, state or federal agency. It is PHMSA's assessment that there would be no direct impact to water resources resulting from the purchase of equipment. While the use of some equipment has the potential to impact water resources, impacts would be minor, and operators would be required to obtain approvals from those agencies with requisite jurisdiction.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation measures are required for the acquisition of equipment as no direct impacts will occur to water resources. If the detection of leaks leads to ground disturbing pipeline activities, work located in or affecting water resources may require coordination and/or authorizations from the agencies with jurisdiction (i.e. work in wetlands, may require permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers, work in floodplains may require coordination with the local FEMA floodplain administrator). Those agencies would identify any applicable mitigation measures during their review and/or approval of work.

Groundwater and Hazardous Materials/Waste

Conclusion:

The acquisition of methane detection and survey equipment will not result in impacts to groundwater or hazardous materials, nor will it create hazardous waste. Where the use of the purchased equipment and detection of leaks leads to needed repairs, those repairs would be outside the scope of the project and operators would be responsible for ensuring there would be no adverse effects to groundwater or hazardous materials. The potential for cumulative impacts to groundwater would be directly related to the nature and scope of the repair work and the location of the needed repairs, relative to the depth to groundwater at the particular repair site. Additionally, the potential to encounter hazardous materials or waste would be dependent on the specific location of repairs relative to the nearest hazardous materials/waste site. While the extent of potential impacts resulting from future repair work is speculative, as discussed in the "Tier 1 Nationwide Environmental Analysis for PHMSA: Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment", no adverse impacts are anticipated. During pipeline repair and/or rehabilitation, hazardous waste may be generated through construction activities, site grading, and boring/drilling. Contaminated soils, not associated with the pipeline, may be treated in ground (in-situ) or removed from the site (ex-situ) for remediation. Project proponents would ensure that proper mitigation (EPA 1997) and personal protection equipment for human safety is utilized if the project proponent has reason to believe hazardous wastes or materials may be present.

<p>Mitigation Measures:</p> <p>The acquisition of equipment will have no direct impact on groundwater or hazardous materials; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.</p>

Soils
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The acquisition of equipment would have no direct impact on soils. Leak detection equipment, line locators, and electrofusion processors would have no effect on soils as there is no ground disturbance involved with this type of equipment. When mobile compression/gas recovery equipment is used to capture gas, it is incumbent upon operators to use equipment in a responsible manner resulting in no adverse impacts to soils. Hydro excavation equipment liquifies the soils in a very specific area and then the slurry is vacuumed up into the truck for appropriate removal and disposal. The precise digging and removal of soil and debris can result in a lower impact on soils when compared to open trenching methods and therefore, it is important for operators to use the equipment responsibly. Where the use of purchased equipment leads to identifying leaks requiring repairs, operators are responsible for ensuring soils are stabilized and best management practices are followed while repairs are being completed.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures:</p> <p>The acquisition of equipment will have no impact on soils and therefore, no mitigation measures are required.</p>

Biological Resources
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>Acquisition of methane identification equipment would not result in direct impacts to biological resources and therefore, PHMSA has determined the purchase of equipment will have No Effect to federally threatened or endangered species and/or critical habitat. The equipment will be utilized in previously disturbed areas where pipeline is existing and serviceable. Where leaks are detected and repairs are needed, operators will follow their normal protocol for maintenance and repairs, ensuring there will be no adverse impacts to biological resources, including federally threatened or endangered species.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures:</p> <p>No mitigation measures are necessary for the acquisition of equipment.</p>

Cultural Resources
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The undertaking consists of the purchase of methane detection equipment, utilizing federal funds, and</p>

therefore, by nature, does result in any physical effect or consequence. Therefore, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), the undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

All equipment would be used by the operators to assist in repairing, rehabilitating, or replacing natural gas pipelines in order to reduce incidents and fatalities associated with natural gas distribution infrastructure. The equipment could assist in improving an operator's leak detection system, address a risk that could lead to the unsafe operation of a system, and/or improve an operator's ability to locate or repair existing pipelines. Where the detection of leaks leads to repair work, or the use of equipment is used to assist in repairs, construction activities would likely be limited to previously disturbed areas. PHMSA anticipates there would be limited potential to impact cultural resources. If repairs, replacement, or other excavation activities were required outside a previously disturbed area, or in a location with potential historic resources such as pavements, following applicable laws and regulations, and engaging in consultation with SHPO/THPO as appropriate, would prevent effects to historic resources. PHMSA does not anticipate cumulative adverse effects to NRHP-eligible or listed historic or archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measures:

The acquisition of methane detection and survey equipment does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties and therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

Section 4(f)

Conclusion:

Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966 as amended (Section 4(f)) (49 U.S.C. § 303(c)); is a federal law that applies to transportation projects that require funding or other approvals by the USDOT. Section 4(f) prohibits the Secretary of Transportation from approving any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or any land from an historic site of national, state, or local significance unless:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land;
- The program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site, resulting from such use.

The acquisition of equipment will not result in the use of a Section 4(f) property.

Mitigation Measures:

The acquisition of equipment will not change the use of any property, including any Section 4(f) properties and therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

Land Use and Transportation

Conclusion:

The acquisition of equipment will not result in changes to land use or have any impact on transportation facilities. Leak detection equipment, line locators, and electrofusion processors do not involve any type of ground disturbance. The use of mobile compression/gas recovery equipment and the use of hydro excavation equipment could have temporary impacts on traffic flow, depending on how and where it is

used. These potential impacts would occur in the future and the extent is speculative. If pipeline maintenance, repair or replacement work is conducted in existing transportation facilities and the equipment is needed to transition or capture gas from existing lines, or hydro excavation equipment is needed to excavate existing lines, the mobile equipment used in roadway facilities may require the need for temporary shifts in traffic. These impacts to traffic patterns would be temporary and normal traffic patterns would resume once the work was completed and the equipment is no longer in use. Where the use of the methane detection and survey equipment leads to the identification of leaks and subsequent repairs, those repairs would be outside the scope of the project. Such repairs are not anticipated to constitute any changes to land use and should occur within the current right-of-way. Should operators identify leaks and repairs needing additional right-of-way, upgrades, or changes to the current system, operators would be solely responsible for evaluating those on an individual basis and coordinating with the appropriate local, state and federal agencies.

Mitigation Measures:

The acquisition of equipment will not result in any changes to land use and will have no impact on transportation facilities and therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

Noise and Vibration

Conclusion:

Acquisition of equipment will not result in direct noise or vibration impacts. The use of detection equipment may result in minor indirect noise impacts. Methane detection equipment may emit low levels of noise when used to assist the user in identifying leaks; however, these are not anticipated to cause any disturbances or adverse effects to others or to be heard by anyone other than the user or those in the company of the user, at the time of use. The use of mobile compression/gas recovery equipment and the use of hydro excavation equipment would result in minor and temporary noise impacts, similar to that of other construction equipment. No vibration impacts should result from the use of purchased equipment. Where the use of the equipment leads to the identification of leaks and subsequent repairs, those repairs would be further removed and outside the scope of the project. Should operators pursue any needed repairs, the resultant noise and vibration impacts would be directly related to the nature and scope of the repair work, the type of equipment used to repair the leaks, and how long the repair work would take. While the exact extent of noise and vibration impacts is unknown, as discussed in the Tier 1 Nationwide Environmental Analysis, individual pieces of equipment may generate noise levels of 80 to 90 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. However, such elevated noise levels would be minor and temporary.

Mitigation Measures:

The acquisition of equipment will not result in any noise or vibration impacts and therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

Environmental Justice

Conclusion:

Acquisition of equipment will have no direct effect on EJ communities. However, the use of the equipment will assist in repairs to the current gas infrastructure for the various operators identified in Table 1. The equipment can also lead to the identification of leaks and prompt repair of leaks, resulting in an increase in

pipeline safety across the system while also improving operation. Therefore, consistent with Executive Order 12898 and DOT Order 5610.2(c), PHMSA has determined the project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. The purchase of the equipment is ultimately anticipated to have an overall beneficial effect to all populations by the prompt identification and repair of leaks in operator's system.

Mitigation Measures:

No impacts will occur as a result of purchasing methane detection equipment and therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

Safety

Conclusion:

The acquisition of methane identification equipment will have no direct effect on safety. However, the purpose of the equipment is to assist in repairing gas infrastructure, capturing methane, and will be used to identify leaks efficiently and effectively in the natural gas system leading to prompt repairs. Ultimately, the proper operation of the equipment could reduce the duration of leaks, which would result in an increase in pipeline safety by reducing the number and severity of incidents caused by undetected or prolonged leaks.

Mitigation Measures:

The project involves the purchase of methane detection and survey equipment used for identifying leaks and therefore, there will be no direct impacts requiring mitigative measures; however, it is noted that the equipment will assist Provisional Selectees in identifying and repairing leaks, ultimately increasing pipeline safety in Provisional selectee's service area by reducing the number and severity of incidents.

III. Public Involvement

On November 9, 2022, PHMSA published a Federal Register notice (87 FR 67748) with a 30-day comment period soliciting comments on the "Tier 1 Nationwide Environmental Assessment for the Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program." During the 30-day comment period, PHMSA received one comment letter from the APGA on various aspects of the program and air quality related analysis in the EA on December 9, 2022. This APGA letter is available for public review at the Docket No: PHMSA-2022-0123.³ PHMSA reviewed the comment letter and determined the comments were not substantial and did not warrant further analysis. One comment provided by the APGA indicated that the majority of construction methods would be replacements using open trenching and that some may want to abandon the existing pipe rather than removing it for replacement. Any departures from methods described in the Tier 1 EA will require additional documentation from the project proponent, as solicited in this Tier 2. No additional public involvement is required for this project; however, this action is consistent with actions discussed in the Tier 1 EA, which included a public comment period.

³ <https://www.regulations.gov/document/PHMSA-2022-0123-0002/comment>



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration**

**Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant
Program**

FY23 Equipment Acquisition Finding of No Significant Impact

PHMSA Approval:

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Finding of No Significant Impact

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), PHMSA is assessing the potential impacts on the natural and human environment that could result from the purchase of various types of equipment through the Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program. The equipment purchased would consist of leak detection equipment (Odor Meters, Methane Detectors, Flame Packs, Ethane Detectors, Gas Sensors), line locators, electrofusion processors, hydro excavation equipment, and mobile compression/gas recovery equipment. The specific equipment for each operator is identified in Table 1 of the Tier 2 EA.

The purpose of this federal action is to aid operators in reducing incidents and fatalities associated with natural gas distribution infrastructure and avoiding economic losses. Specifically, purchase of the equipment is needed to assist in: improving safety by finding and allowing leaks to be addressed sooner (leak detection); locating lines to avoid accidental damage to pipelines and locating pipelines for needed maintenance and repair (line locators); and improving construction methods (electrofusion processor, hydro excavation, mobile compression/gas recovery). The safety risk profile is enhanced by increasing safety of employees and the public, which will result in a more timely and accurate ability to locate and address natural gas emissions, both above ground and below ground, during normal operations and emergency situations. It is noted that federal action consists only of the purchase of equipment and does not include any construction activities for repairs or other activities that may result from the use of the equipment or the identification of leaks which could require ground disturbance. Any construction work for repairs or pipeline replacement activities would be outside the scope of the federal action. The Selected Action Alternative is purchasing the specialized equipment, as identified in Table 1 of the Tier 2 EA. This federal action was evaluated in this Tier 2 EA and as discussed, there will be no direct effects to the natural or human environment as there are no construction activities included as part of the federal action. However, because the equipment to be purchased is intended to assist in construction projects and in effectively identifying leaks for the purpose of efficient repairs, ultimately there will be indirect, beneficial effects resulting from the equipment purchase which include the ultimate and cumulative reduction in greenhouse gasses, providing for an increase in pipeline safety benefitting all populations. Individual operators are responsible for ensuring all maintenance or repair work resulting from the use of acquired equipment is in compliance with all local, state and federal laws. No agency consultation was required for this Selected Action Alternative as it consists only of the purchase of equipment. Public Involvement was not required; however, this action is consistent with actions discussed in the Tier 1 EA, which included a public comment period. Based on the above analysis in this Tier 2 EA, PHMSA has not identified any significant adverse impacts on human health or the environment that would result from implementation of the Selected Action Alternative, which consists solely of the acquisition of equipment.

Consistent with the Tier 1 EA⁴ and based on the information in this Tier 2 EA, PHMSA is making a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.6, for this project as it meets the following conditions:

- The Tier 2 Environmental Questionnaire for the selected action is complete and accurate.
- The types and extent of anticipated environmental impacts are as expected in the Tier 1 EA.
- The recipient of NGDISM grant funds are responsible for compliance with applicable federal and state environmental requirements.
- PHMSA's completion of the Tier 2 Environmental Assessment did not identify adverse and unanticipated types or levels of environmental impacts.

⁴ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/11/09/2022-24378/pipeline-safety-notice-of-availability-of-the-tier-1-nationwide-environmental-assessment-for-the>

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed federal action, namely the Selected Action Alternative, is consistent with existing environmental policies and objectives as set forth in NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment or otherwise, including any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA. Furthermore, PHMSA finds that this Tier 2 EA satisfies the requirements of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and CEQ regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508). As a result, PHMSA will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.