d. Program measures relating to the use of flight procedures can be implemented within the period covered by the program without derogating safety, adversely affecting the efficient use and management of the navigable airspace and air traffic control systems, or adversely affecting other powers and responsibilities of the Administrator prescribed by law.

Specific limitation with respect to FAA's approval of an airport noise compatibility program are delineated in FAR Part 150, Section 150.5. Approval is not a determination concerning the acceptability of land uses under Federal, state, or local law.

Approval does not by itself constitute an FAA implementing action. A request for Federal action or approval to implement specific noise compatibility measures may be required, and an FAA decision on the request may require an environmental assessment of the proposed action. Approval does not constitute a commitment by the FAA to financially assist in the implementation of the program nor a determination that all measures covered by the program are eligible for grant-in-aid funding from the FAA. Where Federal funding is sought, requests for project grants must be submitted to the FAA Airports District Office in Seattle, Washington.

The City of Boise submitted to the FAA the noise exposure maps, descriptions, and other documentation produced during the noise compatibility planning study conducted at the Boise Air Terminal. The Boise Air Terminal noise exposure maps were determined by FAA to be in compliance with applicable requirements on September 18, 1996. Notice of this determination was published in the **Federal Register** on September 26, 1996.

The Boise Air Terminal noise compatibility program contains a proposed noise compatibility program comprised of actions designed for phased implementation by airport management and adjacent jurisdictions from the date of study completion to the year 2000. It was requested that the FAA evaluate and approve this material as a noise compatibility program as described in Section 104(b) of the Act. The FAA began its review of the program on September 18, 1996, and was required by a provision of the Act to approve or disapprove the program within 180 days (other than the use of new flight procedures for noise control). Failure to approve or disapprove such program within the 180-day period shall be deemed to be an approval fo such program.

The submitted program contained 23 proposed actions for noise mitigation on and off the airport. The FAA completed its review and determined that the procedural and substantive requirements of the Act and FAR 150 have been satisfied. The overall program, therefore, was approved by the Associate Administrator for Airports effective March 17, 1997.

These determinations are set forth in detail in a Record of Approval endorsed by the Associate Administrator for Airports on March 17, 1997. The Record of Approval, as well as other evaluation materials and the documents comprising the submittal, are available for review at the FAA office listed above and at the administrative offices of the Boise Air Terminal.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 18, 1997.

Lowell H. Johnson,

Manager, Airports Division, Northwest Mountain Region.

[FR Doc. 97–11487 Filed 5–1–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

[FHWA Docket No. 97–2382]

Development of Performance Measures for the FHWA'S Strategic Plan

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), (DOT).

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In conformity with the Department of Transportation's (DOT) agency-wide strategic planning process, the FHWA is continuing to develop its strategic plan to guide its programs and initiatives to meet its part of the Department's strategic goals and objectives. The FHWA strategic plan will establish the framework, goals, and measures of progress in meeting its goals in fiscal year (FY) 1998 through FY 2003. The FHWA has developed vision, mission, and strategic goal statements and is now seeking input and advice from its partners and customers on how to best measure its progress toward those goals. The FHWA strategic plan will be finalized after the next reauthorization bill for the FHWA's programs is enacted. The FHWA strategic planning process will also support meeting the Department's requirements under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. Comments are requested to help guide the FHWA's development of performance objectives and indicators to measure the progress toward meeting the goals of the strategic plan.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before July 1, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit written, signed comments to the docket number that appears in the heading of this document to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590–0001. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those persons or organizations who desire notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Susan B. Petty, HPP–20, Office of Policy Development, (202)366–0690, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Background

The FHWA provides national leadership, expertise, resources, and information to ensure effective and efficient investment and management of highway transportation systems. The agency's main goals are to promote mobility, productivity, safety, human and natural environment, and national security. The FHWA also promotes innovations in financing, contracting, partnerships, and technologies to meet these goals. The FHWA strategic planning process will set-out the long-term programmatic, policy, and management goals of the FHWA including its planned accomplishments and its schedule for implementation of these goals. Further, consultation with the FHWA's customers and partners through the strategic planning process will help to ensure that the agency is meeting the needs and expectations of the public.

The FHWA has direct responsibility for a significant number of highway transportation programs such as Federal lands highways, commercial vehicle safety and enforcement, research, technology development, national standards, and technical assistance. In addition, it also has a significant role in influencing the strategic development of State and local transportation systems as effective and efficient elements of the national transportation system through programs, policies, and funding. Because of the FHWA's stewardship role of the national highway transportation system, its strategic goals and performance objectives and indicators reflect initiatives that are in

its span of influence but beyond its direct control. The FHWA strategic planning process reflects this broad scope of influence and the performance objectives and indicators developed through this process will indicate the performance of the highway transportation system nationwide. It is important to note that the performance objectives and indicators for the FHWA are developed to measure the performance of the entire highway transportation system nationwide. These objectives and indicators are not intended or appropriate to apply to individual States or jurisdictions.

The strategic plan is an integral part of the ongoing initiatives in the FHWA to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of its programs. A strategic approach to managing its program and resources is not new to the FHWA—the FHWA's current strategic planning process builds on ongoing initiatives in quality, customer and partner feedback, and program evaluation. The FHWA ''Quality Journey'' provides the overarching principles and framework for the FHWA to create and support continuous quality improvements throughout its activities and strategic planning.

Outreach for FHWA Strategic Planning

As part of its overall strategic planning effort, the FHWA is engaging its customers and partners in the development and definition of objectives and indicators of performance. The FHWA gathered very useful information during the extensive outreach conducted last year in preparation for the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Pub.L. 102–240, 105 Stat. 1914. This outreach included 13 regional forums and over 100 focus groups in approximately 40 States throughout the country. The information from these meetings provided valuable input for the FHWA's current strategic planning initiative. As the FHWA moves to the next step to develop performance objectives and indicators for its strategic plan, it is pursuing a number of methods to consult with its customers and partners. These include adding information on the FHWA home page on the Internet (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov), as well as requesting public comments through this **Federal Register** notice. In addition, the FHWA has written to more than 100 customer and partner groups to determine the level of participation that they would like to have in this process. While many will provide written comments, it is anticipated that the FHWA will also hold a number of focus group meetings on the various strategic goals. The FHWA plans to hold these focus group meetings between late April and June of this year.

The FHWA'S Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

In 1996, the FHWA took the initial steps for this strategic plan and approved its current Vision and Mission statements, Strategic Goals and Preamble. All of these were based on the 1994 DOT strategic plan, the reauthorization outreach process, and the previous strategic planning efforts. The following are the first elements of the FY 1998 to FY 2003 strategic plan for the FHWA:

Preamble

As a visionary and vigilant Federal Agency committed to fair and equitable treatment, the Federal Highway Administration will focus our investment of human, financial, and technological resources to make this Vision a reality and to undertake this Mission to meet the transportation challenges of today and tomorrow.

Vision

Create the best transportation system in the world for the American people through proactive leadership, innovation and excellence in service.

Mission

We provide proactive leadership, expertise, resources and information to continually improve the quality of our Nation's highway system and its intermodal connections. We undertake this mission in cooperation with all our partners to enhance the country's economic vitality, quality of life and the environment.

Strategic Goals

1. *Mobility:* Continually improve the public's access to activities, goods and services through preservation, improvement and expansion of the highway transportation system and enhancement of its operations, efficiency, and intermodal connections.

2. *Productivity:* Continuously improve the economic efficiency of the Nation's transportation system to enhance America's position in the global economy.

3. *Safety:* Continually decrease the number and severity of highway accidents.

4. *Human and natural environment:* Protect and enhance the natural environment and communities affected by highway transportation.

5. *National security:* Improve the Nation's ability to respond to emergencies and natural disasters and enhance national defense mobility.

Performance Objectives and Indicators

As the next step in its strategic planning process, the FHWA is requesting input for the development of performance objectives and indicators to measure its progress toward meeting its goals. The strategic plan will cover the period from FY 1998 through FY 2003 and these performance objectives and indicators will quantify the FHWA's accomplishments toward its goals for that period. The performance objectives and indicators in the strategic plan will focus on measuring the results or outcomes of initiatives and programs over this 6-year period. A ''performance objective'' is a measurable target level of results that is proposed to be accomplished toward a strategic goal. This could include, for example, increasing highway pavements and bridges that are in good condition, reducing highway crashes, or reducing the costs and time of highway freight movements. ''Performance indicators'' are the specific data that are used to measure the accomplishment. This could include, for example, the percentage of National Highway System (NHS) highways that are above a benchmark for serviceability ratings, a change in the rate of fatal accidents, or reducing the ton-mile cost of freight transportation.

To facilitate public comments on possible objectives and indicators to gauge progress toward the FHWA's strategic goals, the following questions are posed. The FHWA is not seeking answers to these specific questions, but offers them only as a starting point to assist commenters in preparing recommendations. Commenters are encouraged to expand on these questions in their deliberations. The basic question in each category, ''What will change as these goals begin to be met?'', will provide information for the FHWA's performance objectives. The follow-up question in each category, ''How can these changes best be measured?'', will help to develop specific, quantifiable performance indicators.

The FHWA anticipates that most of these goals could be measured by existing data or by combinations or indexes of existing data. However, the FHWA understands that some new data sources, such as, customer surveys may need to be developed. The FHWA is also requesting recommendations from commenters on appropriate sources of data that can be used for the performance indicators.

Another challenge in this process is to limit the number of measures in the agency's strategic plan to those that are the most important indicators of results. The experience of other agencies and organizations in setting performance objectives and indicators has demonstrated that using too many objectives and indicators may be confusing for program managers and partners and may diffuse the agency's focus on its strategic goals. Therefore, the FHWA is also requesting that commenters prioritize the performance objectives and indicators that they propose to assist the FHWA in selecting only the most critical indicators of performance.

An optional format is attached to this notice that may be helpful for commenters to use to provide recommendations. This format could be used for responses and suggestions on any of the strategic goals. The format provides a brief outline form for commenters to offer performance objectives and indicators, a ranking of priorities, and any possible sources of data for the performance indicators.

The following, lists the five strategic goals and a series of questions that may be of assistance to the commenters:

1. *Mobility:* Continually improve the public's access to activities, goods and services through preservation, improvement and expansion of the highway transportation system and enhancement of its operations, efficiency, and intermodal connections.

a. How does highway mobility benefit or affect individuals and community quality of life? How could this be quantified and measured? Should measures include commuting times, personal travel costs, public perception, or increased access to home, work, rural areas, and recreation?

b. What are the expectations of the general public for ease of access and mobility? How can these expectations be measured? Are highways and other transportation facilities expanded or built where and when they are needed? Are alternatives to highway transportation and intermodal facilities effectively developed to provide more transportation services to the public? Do national surveys provide a good indication of progress in this area?

c. It has been suggested that increasing the percentage of vehicle miles traveled on NHS highways that operate at ''full performance'' would increase mobility. How should full performance be measured, (i.e., traveling at a posted or design speed, good pavement conditions, reduced congestion, or others)? Should measures of full performance be linked to the public's exposure to adverse highway conditions such as vehicle miles traveled or the number of vehicles using highways and bridges that are below some benchmark?

d. Highway construction should result in highways that last longer, ride better, and cost less over the life of the highway. What specific measures would best capture these results?

e. How does the current condition of the highways impact mobility? Do factors, such as, measures of pavement and bridge conditions, construction delays, or lanes not in service relate to these impacts?

f. How will the application of new technologies affect highway mobility? How should the impacts or results of deploying new technologies be measured?

g. How does the operation of the highways affect mobility? Would measures of reducing delays from accidents and construction delays be an appropriate measure? How should the impacts on mobility of improved highway safety or directional signs and signals be measured?

h. What will be the impacts on mobility of deploying advanced technologies from Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as traveler information systems, incident management, and electronic toll collection? How can these results be measured?

2. *Productivity:* Continuously improve the economic efficiency of the Nation's transportation system to enhance America's position in the global economy.

a. What economic data and indicators would be directly affected by improvements in highway transportation?

b. Most products are moved on the highway at some point in the production process between gathering the raw materials and the final distribution to the consumer. What measurable factors would show improvements in this freight movement? Would an appropriate measure of improved highway freight movements include some measurement of cost such as reducing transportation costs?

c. How can technologies, such as, mapping, tracking, computerized signal control, and other Intelligent Transportation Systems improve productivity? How can the results of these improvements be measured?

d. What transportation factors are considered by the public, business community, freight movers, intermodal facility operators in making economic decisions? Would these factors be appropriate measures for this goal?

e. What factors indicate the efficiency of passenger and freight transportation across international highway borders? What are the best measures of how efficiently these crossings are operating?

f. How will the application of new technologies affect productivity? How should the impacts of new technologies be measured?

3. *Safety:* Continually decrease the number and severity of highway accidents.

a. Is the public satisfied with the level of safety on the highways? How does the public assess highway safety (e.g., crashes, deaths, personal perceptions, etc.)?

b. What are the best measures of improvements in safety? Should safety be measured by the number or rate of highway fatalities? How should crash severity be measured? Should it include all highway accidents, injury-only accidents, or solely the number of fatalities?

c. Would a comparison of fatal accidents to all accidents (or to injury-only accidents) indicate a change in the severity of accidents?

d. Highway safety issues of particular responsibility or concern for the FHWA include truck and bus safety, preventing run-off-the-road crashes, creating clear zones or forgiving highways, safety at railroad grade crossings, or construction work zones, as well as safety on certain high priority roadways, such as the National Highway System. How should improvements in these areas be measured? What would be appropriate measures to track progress in these safety areas?

e. How can the application of new technologies enhance highway safety? How should this be measured?

4. *Human and natural environment:* Protect and enhance the natural environment and communities affected by highway transportation.

a. What highway and transportation elements improve the community? What is the role of transportation in supporting welfare-to-work initiatives? Would decreases in commuting time or improving on-time travel or access to services be appropriate and measurable? How can the impacts and benefits to communities of highway transportation be measured?

b. How does highway access to National parks and Federal lands impact the human and natural environment? How can these benefits and impacts be measured? Would increased access to pedestrian facilities and bikeways or the number of miles of landscaped highways or the number of beautification programs be significant factors?

c. What are the changes in the environment when highways enhance the natural environment? How can these changes be measured? Would increasing the number or percentage of highway projects that accommodate or enhance environmental concerns be an adequate measure? Would decreasing the number or percentage of Americans living in air quality, non-attainment areas be an adequate measure? Should the number of acres of wetlands or the number of historic sites restored or avoided be a measure?

d. Do national and localized surveys of environmental partners and the general public on satisfaction with highways' impact on the environment provide useful information to measure accomplishments?

5. *National security:* Improve the Nation's ability to respond to emergencies and enhance national defense.

a. Following a natural disaster, quickly restoring the transportation system to minimal service, and then full service, is a key factor in rebuilding a community. Would appropriate measures of this goal be: (1) How long it takes to provide access to disaster areas for emergency relief?; (2) How long does it take to provide emergency funding following a disaster?; and (3) How long does it take to complete repairs of highways and bridges and restore full service following a disaster?

b. The FHWA provides direct service to the Department of Defense (DOD) to ensure highway access for national defense. In addition to working directly with DOD to establish its needs and measures, the FHWA would like comments from other partners and customers on this issue. For example, would increasing the percentage of highways designated for defense purposes that meet the requirements of DOD be an adequate measure? Would the number of highway movements by DOD that are on-time or the percentage of miles traveled by DOD that are on-time be good measures?

The following optional format is provided for commenters:

The FHWA'S Strategic Planning Process: Optional Format for Comments on Performance Objectives and Indicators

This is an optional form offered to facilitate comments. Commenters are invited to provide recommendations on one or all of the five strategic goals (mobility, productivity, safety, human and natural environment, and national security). For each strategic goal on which comments are provided, please recommend performance objectives and performance indicators for that strategic goal. In addition, please prioritize the factors that are proposed and include any data sources that would be most appropriate.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organization: *(optional)* _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Strategic Goal: _____

(Mobility, Productivity, Safety, Human and Natural Resources, or National Security)

Performance Objectives:

Priority

(What should be accomplished to reach this goal?)

*(1=highest/3=lowest)*_____

1. _____

_____

_____

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR:

(How can these changes best be measured?)

_____

_____

_____

Possible source of data:

_____

Additional performance objectives and indicators for each strategic goal may be presented in the same format.

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 315; 49 U.S.C. 322; 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on: April 25, 1997.

Jane Garvey,

Acting Federal Highway Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97–11452 Filed 5–1–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

[Docket No. RSPA–97–2346; Notice 1]

Pipeline Safety: Liquefied Natural Gas Facilities Petition for Waiver; Northern Eclipse, Inc.

Northern Eclipse, Inc. (NE) has petitioned the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR Part 193, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Facilities: Federal Safety Standards. The petition applies to the Northern Eclipse's proposed Gas Treating and Liquefaction (GTL) unit to be located 20 miles north of Anchorage, Alaska. NE provides assurance that an equivalent level of safety will be achieved through compliance with alternative safety requirements for portable LNG facilities and, the siting requirements for liquefaction units. The alternative requirements are described in paragraph 2–3.4 of the National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 59A, Standard for Production, Storage, and Handling of Liquefied Natural Gas (1996).

The petitioner's rationale for the waiver rests on the following:

1. The NE GTL unit will be supplied with gas from the Beluga-Anchorage pipeline through a 2,500 foot, privately-owned service pipeline installed by NE downstream of the sales meter.

2. The NE GTL unit will have minimal LNG surge capacity, and there will be no storage at the NE GTL facility.

3. The NE GTL unit's output will be trucked from the GTL unit to end users, including one or more local distribution companies.

4. The NE GTL unit will not be used by the Beluga-Anchorage pipeline in any way to transport gas on their behalf.

5. DOT does not assert similar jurisdiction over liquefiers connected to the local distribution companies' (LDCs) that fuel motor vehicles. The GTL unit would fulfil essentially the same function.

6. The NE GTL unit will be no different from other consumers of gas. For example, chemical plants, power plants, and other end users are not regulated even though they are supplied with gas from a pipeline.

7. The NE GTL unit would be exempt under Section 193.2001(b)(2) because it would be a natural gas treatment facility without any storage.

8. The NE GTL unit will be a transportable unit mounted on skids.

In view of the above, NE alleges that an extension of Part 193 jurisdiction to the proposed facility would be inconsistent with the language and purpose of the regulation. However, NE proposes to ensure equivalent safety through compliance with the alternative safety provisions for portable LNG facilities as described in paragraph 2–3.4 of the NFPA 59A and with the siting requirements for liquefaction units.

The Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) considers the 2,500 foot, NE-installed gas pipeline supplying gas to the NE GTL facility (a large volume customer) a transmission line. Therefore, the gas line is subject to 49 CFR Part 192, *Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline: Minimum Federal Safety Standards.* Recent revision of the definition of Transmission *pipeline in Section 192.3 (61 FR 28783; June 6, 1996) includes*