

194 FERC ¶ 61,219
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Before Commissioners: Laura V. Swett, Chairman;
David Rosner, Lindsay S. See,
Judy W. Chang, and David LaCerte.

Golden Triangle Storage, LLC

Docket No. CP25-167-000

ORDER ISSUING CERTIFICATE

(Issued March 19, 2026)

1. On March 31, 2025, Golden Triangle Storage, LLC (Golden Triangle) filed an application pursuant to section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA)¹ and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations,² requesting authorization to construct and operate an expansion of its existing natural gas storage facility in Jefferson County, Texas (Spindletop Expansion Project), reaffirmation of its market-based rate authority, and related authorizations and waivers. No party opposes the application. For the reasons discussed below, we grant the requested authorizations, subject to conditions described herein.

¹ 15 U.S.C. § 717f(c).

² 18 C.F.R. pt. 157 (2025).

I. Background

2. Golden Triangle, a Delaware limited liability company,³ is a natural gas company within the meaning of section 2(6) of the NGA.⁴ Golden Triangle provides natural gas storage, hub, and wheeling services in interstate commerce at market-based rates.

3. On December 31, 2007, the Commission authorized Golden Triangle to construct and operate natural gas storage facilities in Jefferson and Orange Counties, Texas (Central Storage Site), consisting of: (1) two natural gas salt dome storage caverns (Caverns 1 and 2); (2) a 14,205 horsepower (hp) compressor station (Central Compressor Station); (3) a 9.1-mile-long, 24-inch-diameter dual pipeline header system (Pipeline Header System); and (4) various appurtenant facilities. The Commission also authorized Golden Triangle to provide firm and interruptible storage and hub services at market-based rates (December 2007 Order).⁵ These facilities have a certificated total working gas capacity of 16 billion cubic feet (Bcf), a certificated total base gas capacity of 8.48 Bcf, an injection capability of 300 million cubic feet per day (MMcf/d), and a withdrawal capability of 600 MMcf/d. Golden Triangle placed Cavern 1 and Cavern 2 into service in 2010 and 2012 respectively, though both caverns went into service at a capacity lower than the maximum certificated capacities authorized in the December 2007 Order. Golden Triangle has been granted several extensions of time to complete rewatering cycles⁶ to increase the caverns to their maximum certificated capacity.⁷

³ Golden Triangle is wholly owned by Caliche Development Partners III, LLC (Caliche), a Delaware limited liability company. Caliche is owned by CDP III Holdings, LLC, who in turn is owned by the privately held investment firm Mallard Evergreen Holdings, LLC (Mallard Evergreen) and Caliche Management III, LLC (Caliche Management). Caliche Management is owned by individuals currently employed by Caliche. Mallard Evergreen is owned by Sixth Street TAO Partners, L.P. and its affiliated parallel investment vehicles (Sixth Street Fund). Sixth Street Fund is owned by various passive limited partners and is one of several investment funds of the global investment management firm Sixth Street.

⁴ 15 U.S.C. § 717a(6).

⁵ *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 121 FERC ¶ 61,313 (2007); *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 132 FERC ¶ 61,101 (2010), *order on reh'g*, 134 FERC ¶ 61,036 (2011).

⁶ Rewatering cycles, also known as solution mining, are conducted by adding brine to caverns to reach final certificated storage parameters.

⁷ *See, e.g.*, Commission Staff December 18, 2024 Letter Granting Extension of Time, Docket No. CP07-414-003; Commission Staff January 11, 2022 Letter Granting Extension of Time, CP07-414-000, et al.; Commission Staff November 1, 2017 Letter

4. On January 18, 2024, the Commission amended the December 2007 Order, allowing Golden Triangle to increase the maximum injection rate to 765 MMcf/d and the maximum withdrawal rate to 680 MMcf/d at its Central Storage Site, and granted Golden Triangle a reaffirmation of its market-based rate authority.⁸ Golden Triangle states that it has begun to utilize the higher withdrawal rates and anticipates utilizing the higher injection rates in 2026.⁹

5. On July 23, 2024, the Commission authorized Golden Triangle to expand the Central Storage Site by constructing: (1) two additional natural gas salt dome storage caverns (Caverns 3 and 4) and associated well pads; (2) six 5,500 hp reciprocating compressor units at the existing Central Compressor Station; and (3) various appurtenant facilities (GTS Expansion Project).¹⁰ The Commission also reaffirmed Golden Triangle's authority to charge market-based rates for firm and interruptible storage services, hub services, and wheeling services. The GTS Expansion Project will add 14.4 Bcf of working gas capacity and 5.3 Bcf of base gas capacity and will increase injection capability by 442 MMcf/d and withdrawal capability by 860 MMcf/d. The GTS Expansion Project is currently under construction, with anticipated in-service dates for Cavern 3 and Cavern 4 in the fourth quarter of 2026 and in 2027, respectively.

II. Proposal

A. Facilities

6. In this application Golden Triangle proposes to construct and operate: (1) four new salt dome storage caverns and associated well pads (Cavern 8, Cavern 10, Cavern 11, and Cavern 12; collectively, New Caverns);¹¹ (2) ten 5,500-hp reciprocating compressor units housed in a new compressor building; (3) a gas dehydration facility located next to the compressor building; (4) a 40-foot-high single blowdown flare

Granting Extension of Time, Docket No. CP07-414-000, et al.; Commission Staff November 15, 2013 Letter Granting Extension of Time, Docket No. CP07-414-000, *et al.*

⁸ *Golden Triangle Storage, LLC*, 186 FERC ¶ 61,037 (2024).

⁹ Golden Triangle February 20, 2026 Response to Commission Staff's February 18, 2026 Information Request at 2.

¹⁰ *Golden Triangle Storage, LLC*, 188 FERC ¶ 61,052 (2024) (July 2024 Order).

¹¹ Golden Triangle utilizes the cavern numbers assigned by the Texas Railroad Commission.

stack; (5) five water and gas pipeline service corridors;¹² (6) five access roads; and (7) appurtenant facilities. Golden Triangle states that much of the Spindletop Expansion Project will be located within the existing boundaries of the existing Central Storage Site, which Golden Triangle controls through a long-term lease. The remainder of the project will be located on property adjacent to the Central Storage Site owned by the same landowner, which Golden Triangle plans to lease.

7. The Spindletop Expansion Project will add a total of 30.75 Bcf of working gas capacity and 24.2 Bcf of base gas capacity to Golden Triangle's existing facilities.¹³ The aggregate injection and withdrawal capability at the Central Storage Site will increase by 1,000 MMcf/d.¹⁴

B. Reaffirmation of Market-Based Rate Authority and Request for Waivers

8. Golden Triangle requests reaffirmation of its existing market-based rate authority for its proposed storage and deliverability. Golden Triangle also requests that the Commission grant continued waivers of the Commission's regulations applicable to projects charging cost-based rates.

C. Open Season

9. Golden Triangle held non-binding open seasons and reverse open seasons from February 1 to May 16, 2024, and from February 24 to March 21, 2025. In response, Golden Triangle received bids from multiple unaffiliated parties indicating interest in contracting for the services related to the Spindletop Expansion Project. Golden Triangle did not receive any offers to relinquish capacity.

¹² Each service corridor will contain one 16-inch-diameter raw surface water pipeline, one 16-inch-diameter brine return pipeline, one 20-inch-diameter gas pipeline, one 24-inch-diameter gas pipeline, one 2-inch-diameter instrument air pipelines, and one multi-conduit electrical and fiber optic duct bank.

¹³ Cavern 8 and Cavern 10 will each have a working gas capacity of 8.56 Bcf and a base gas capacity of 6.74 Bcf. Cavern 11 and Cavern 12 will each have a working gas capacity of 6.82 Bcf and a base gas capacity of 5.37 Bcf.

¹⁴ Each of the new caverns will have an injection capability of 625 MMcf/d and a withdrawal capability of 625 MMcf/d.

10. Golden Triangle states that it is engaged in negotiations with these prospective customers and anticipates executing long-term binding precedent agreements covering a substantial portion of the new firm working gas storage capacity.¹⁵

III. Notice, Interventions, and Comments

11. Notice of Golden Triangle's application was published in the *Federal Register* on April 23, 2025, with comments, interventions, and protests due on May 1, 2025.¹⁶ The Center for LNG; Golden Pass LNG Terminal, LLC; and the Natural Gas Supply Association filed timely, unopposed motions to intervene.¹⁷ No comments were filed.

IV. Discussion

12. Because Golden Triangle's proposed facilities will provide natural gas storage service in interstate commerce subject to the Commission's jurisdiction, the proposal is subject to the requirements of subsections (c) and (e) of section 7 of the NGA.¹⁸

A. Certificate Policy Statement

13. The Certificate Policy Statement provides guidance for evaluating proposals to certificate new construction.¹⁹ The Certificate Policy Statement establishes criteria for determining whether there is a need for a proposed project and whether the proposed project will serve the public interest. It explains that, in deciding whether to authorize the construction of new facilities, the Commission balances the public benefits against the potential adverse consequences. The Commission's goal is to appropriately consider the

¹⁵ Golden Triangle July 21, 2025 Response to Commission Staff's July 1, 2025 Information Request at 15; *see also* Golden Triangle October 14, 2025 Response to Commission Staff's October 7, 2025 Information Request at 5 (stating that negotiations are ongoing and that it intends to file precedent agreements in the first quarter of 2026); Golden Triangle February 20, 2026 Response to Commission Staff's February 18, 2026 Information Request at 5 (reaffirming that negotiations are ongoing and that it intends to file precedent agreements in the first quarter of 2026).

¹⁶ 90 Fed. Reg. 17060 (Apr. 23, 2025)

¹⁷ Timely, unopposed motions to intervene are granted by operation of Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. 18 C.F.R. § 385.214(c) (2025).

¹⁸ 15 U.S.C. §§ 717f(c), (e).

¹⁹ *Certification of New Interstate Nat. Gas Pipeline Facilities*, 88 FERC ¶ 61,227, *corrected*, 89 FERC ¶ 61,040 (1999), *clarified*, 90 FERC ¶ 61,128, *further clarified*, 92 FERC ¶ 61,094 (2000).

enhancement of competitive transportation alternatives, the possibility of overbuilding, subsidization by existing customers, the applicant's responsibility for unsubscribed capacity, the avoidance of unnecessary disruptions of the environment, and the unneeded exercise of eminent domain in evaluating new construction.

14. Under this policy, the threshold requirement for applicants proposing new projects is that the applicant must be prepared to financially support the project without relying on subsidization from its existing customers. The next step is to determine whether the applicant has made efforts to eliminate or minimize any adverse effects the project might have on the applicant's existing customers, existing pipelines in the market and their captive customers, and landowners and communities affected by the new facilities. If residual adverse effects on these interest groups are identified after efforts have been made to minimize them, the Commission will evaluate the project by balancing the evidence of public benefits to be achieved against the residual adverse effects. This is essentially an economic test. Only when the benefits outweigh the adverse effects on economic interests will the Commission proceed to complete the environmental analysis, where other interests are considered.

1. No Subsidy Requirement and Project Need

15. As discussed above, the threshold requirement for applicants proposing new projects is that the applicant must be prepared to financially support the project without relying on subsidization from its existing customers. Golden Triangle currently provides storage, hub, and wheeling services at market-based rates and seeks reaffirmation of its existing market-based rate authorization. Therefore, it assumes the economic risks associated with its facilities and services, to the extent that any capacity is undersubscribed or that revenues are not sufficient to recover costs.²⁰ Thus, we find that Golden Triangle's proposal satisfies the threshold requirement of the Certificate Policy Statement.

16. As previously noted, Golden Triangle conducted non-binding open seasons and after receiving bids from multiple unaffiliated parties expressing interest in a substantial portion of the project's incremental firm working gas storage capacity for three to seven year terms, is engaged in negotiations with these parties, and anticipates executing long-term binding precedent agreements covering a substantial portion of the new firm working gas storage capacity that will be available from the New Caverns.²¹

²⁰ *Bluewater Gas Storage, LLC*, 171 FERC ¶ 61,132, at P 14 (2020) ("By charging market-based rates, Bluewater assumes the economic risks associated with the costs of the project's facilities.").

²¹ Application at 11. We note that where need has been sufficiently demonstrated, the Commission does not require that storage facilities proposing to charge market-based rates execute binding precedent agreements prior to authorization. *Black Bayou Gas*

Golden Triangle states that its proposed project is designed to meet demand for natural gas storage in the Gulf Coast Region, as demonstrated by the results of the open seasons.²² The project will enhance Golden Triangle's ability to move natural gas to and from storage on very short notice and at high flow rates, support deliveries for highly variable loads, satisfy market requirements during periods of peak demand and interruptions in natural gas production and liquefied natural gas export operations, and balance growing sources of onshore production in the Permian Shale, Haynesville Shale, Barnett Shale, Bossier Sands, and Eagle Ford with variable market demand.²³ Based on the above, we find that Golden Triangle has demonstrated a need for the proposed project.

2. Impacts on Existing Customers, Existing Pipelines or Storage Providers and Their Customers, and Landowners and Surrounding Communities

17. We find that the Spindletop Expansion Project will not adversely affect service to Golden Triangle's existing customers or to other pipelines or storage providers and their captive customers. The project is designed to provide additional storage services while maintaining services for Golden Triangle's existing customers. As discussed below,²⁴ the proposed project will operate in a competitive market and will not displace any other market area storage capacity. The proposed project will enhance storage options available to pipelines and their customers and increase competitive alternatives.

Storage, LLC, 192 FERC 61,080, at n.33 (2025) (citing *Miss. Hub, LLC*, 190 FERC ¶ 61,175, at P 8 (2025); *Spire Storage West, LLC*, 179 FERC ¶ 61,123, at P 5 (2022); and *Magnum Gas Storage, LLC*, 134 FERC ¶ 61,197, at P 12 (2011)). Market need is often established based on non-binding expressions of interest following an open season. In its public convenience and necessity determination, the Commission considers evidence of market need, as well as ensuring that adverse impacts, including the need to exercise eminent domain, are sufficiently minimized. See, e.g., *D'Lo Gas Storage, LLC*, 140 FERC ¶ 61,182, at PP 27, 29 (2012) (finding need based on formal bids received during a non-binding open season for project that would occupy land owned or controlled by lease by the applicant at the time of the application); *Magnum Gas Storage*, 134 FERC ¶ 61,197 at P 23 (finding need based on 26 conforming responses during the open season and noting, in its public convenience and necessity determination, "minimal" adverse impacts on landowners where project would occupy land subleased by applicants in a rural, undeveloped area).

²² Application at 18.

²³ *Id.* at 19.

²⁴ See *infra* PP 20-31.

No pipelines, storage companies, or their captive customers have protested the proposed project.

18. We are further satisfied that Golden Triangle has taken appropriate steps to minimize adverse economic impacts on landowners and surrounding communities. The project will be mostly located on the existing, previously disturbed Central Storage Site; the rest of the project will be located on the adjacent property, which is owned by the same landowner of the Central Storage Site. The landowner, with whom Golden Triangle states that it plans to enter into a long-term lease, has not protested the proposed project.²⁵ All existing and proposed facilities are in an industrial area that is already developed and used for natural gas storage. No residences or businesses will be displaced, relocated, or otherwise significantly adversely affected as a result of construction and operation of the project. Accordingly, we find that the proposed project has been designed to minimize adverse economic impacts on landowners and surrounding communities.

3. Certificate Policy Statement Conclusion

19. We find that Golden Triangle has demonstrated a need for the project, and, further, that the project will not have adverse impacts on existing customers, existing pipelines, or other storage providers and their existing customers, and that the project will have minimal economic impacts on landowners and surrounding communities. Therefore, we conclude that the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the criteria set forth in the Certificate Policy Statement and analyze the environmental impacts of the project below.²⁶

B. Rates

1. Market-Based Rates

20. Golden Triangle requests that the Commission reaffirm its determination that it may charge market-based rates for its firm and interruptible storage services and hub services. Golden Triangle does not propose changes in its wheeling service capability and, as a result, does not request a reaffirmation of its market-based rate authorization in

²⁵ Moreover we note that Golden Triangle has stated that it is finalizing an option agreement for a long-term lease and expects to execute the option agreement within 30 days. See Golden Triangle February 20, 2026 Response to Commission Staff's February 18, 2026 Information Request at 4.

²⁶ See Certificate Policy Statement, 88 FERC at 61,745-46 (explaining that only when the project benefits outweigh the adverse effects on the economic interests will the Commission then complete the environmental analysis).

this regard.²⁷ In support of its request, Golden Triangle has submitted a market power study (Market Power Study).²⁸

21. The Commission evaluates requests to charge market-based rates for storage under the analytical framework of its Alternative Rate Policy Statement.²⁹ The Commission's main concern in approving the use of market-based rates for a service is the presence that the applicant has in the relevant marketplace. Simply put, if the applicant has market power over a service in the relevant marketplace, then the Commission will not permit it to charge market-based rates for that service.³⁰ The Commission will approve market-based rates for storage providers where the applicant has demonstrated it lacks market power³¹ or has adopted conditions that significantly mitigate market power.³² The Commission has approved requests to charge market-based rates for storage services based on a finding that the applicants of the proposed projects would not be able to exercise market power due to their relatively small size, their relatively low anticipated share of the market, the existence of numerous competitors in the relevant geographic market, and/or the ease of entry into the relevant market.³³

²⁷ Application at 30 n.44.

²⁸ See *id.*, Ex. I.

²⁹ *Alternatives to Traditional Cost-of-Serv. Ratemaking for Nat. Gas Pipelines*, 74 FERC ¶ 61,076 (*Alternative Rate Policy Statement*), *reh'g denied*, 75 FERC ¶ 61,024 (1996), *petitions for review denied and dismissed sub nom. Burlington Res. Oil & Gas Co. v. FERC*, 172 F.3d 918 (D.C. Cir. 1998), *criteria modified, Rate Regul. of Certain Nat. Gas Storage Facilities*, Order No. 678, FERC Stats. & Regs. ¶ 31,220 (cross-referenced at 115 FERC ¶ 61,343), *order on clarification and reh'g*, Order No. 678-A, 117 FERC ¶ 61,190 (2006).

³⁰ *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 152 FERC ¶ 61,158, at P 9 (2015).

³¹ Market power is defined as the ability to profitably maintain prices above competitive levels for a significant period of time. *Alternative Rate Policy Statement*, 74 FERC at 61,230.

³² Order No. 678, FERC Stats. & Regs. ¶ 31,220, *order on clarification and reh'g*, Order No. 678-A, 117 FERC ¶ 61,190.

³³ *Egan Hub Partners, L.P.*, 99 FERC ¶ 61,269 (2002); *Egan Hub Partners, L.P.*, 95 FERC ¶ 61,395 (2001); *Moss Bluff Hub Partners, L.P.*, 80 FERC ¶ 61,181 (1997); *Egan Hub Partners, L.P.*, 77 FERC ¶ 61,016 (1996).

22. Pursuant to the Alternative Rate Policy Statement, the Commission has developed a framework for evaluation of requests for market-based rates. This framework has two principal purposes: (1) to determine whether the applicant can withhold or restrict services and, as a result, increase price by a significant amount for a significant period of time; and (2) to determine whether the applicant can discriminate unduly in price or terms and conditions of service. To find that an applicant cannot withhold or restrict services, significantly increase prices over an extended period, or unduly discriminate, the Commission must find that either there is a lack of market power because customers have good alternatives,³⁴ or that the applicant or the Commission can mitigate the market power with specified conditions.

23. Consistent with the methodology provided by the Alternative Rate Policy Statement, our analysis of whether Golden Triangle has the ability to exercise market power includes three major steps. First, we will review whether Golden Triangle has specifically and fully defined the relevant markets to determine which specific products or services are identified, and the suppliers of the products and services that provide good alternatives to the applicant's ability to exercise market power.³⁵ As part of this step, we will also identify the relevant geographic market. Second, we will assess Golden Triangle's market share and market concentration. We use market share and the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) as screens to assess whether an applicant has the ability to exercise market power in defined product and geographic markets. However, HHI is just one factor we may evaluate.³⁶ The Alternative Rate Policy Statement recognizes that having a large market share in a concentrated market does not constitute market power if ease of entry and other competitive factors can prevent

³⁴ A "good alternative" is an alternative that is available soon enough, has a price that is low enough, and has a quality high enough to permit customers to substitute the alternative for an applicant's service. *Alternative Rate Policy Statement*, 74 FERC at 61,231.

³⁵ The relevant product market consists of the applicant's service and other services that are good alternatives to the applicant's services. *Id.*

³⁶ For example, the Commission has accepted an HHI of 1,800 as the threshold indicating the potential ability for an applicant to exercise market power. In cases where the HHI was higher than 1,800, the Commission has performed further review to determine whether other competitive factors nevertheless will prevent the applicant from being able to exercise market power. *See, e.g., UGI Storage Co.*, 133 FERC ¶ 61,073 (2010); *Arlington Storage Co., LLC*, 125 FERC ¶ 61,306 (2008); *Rendezvous Gas Servs., L.L.C.*, 112 FERC ¶ 61,141 (2005).

the applicant from exercising significant market power.³⁷ Third, we will evaluate other relevant factors such as ease of entering the market.

a. Relevant Product and Geographic Markets

24. In its Market Power Study, Golden Triangle defines the relevant product market as the market for firm and interruptible natural gas storage service within the relevant geographic market,³⁸ which it defines as the Gulf Coast Production Area, which includes

³⁷ In the Alternative Rate Policy Statement, the Commission stated that its consideration of a market-based rate proposal will include an examination of market concentration. Further, it explained that:

[t]o measure market concentration, one generally considers the summary measure of market concentration known as the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI). If the HHI is small then one can generally conclude that sellers cannot exercise market power in this market. A small HHI indicates that customers have sufficiently diverse sources of supply in this market that no one firm or group of firms acting together could profitably raise market price. If the HHI is higher then additional analysis may be needed to determine if the seller can exercise market power.

The Commission will analyze the HHI calculation for the relevant markets. The HHI will be evaluated for each relevant path and/or origin market and each destination market utilizing the relevant data for each mainline receipt point (origin market) and each delivery point (destination market). If an applicant wishes to argue for either a broader or narrower market definition, it should also include calculations for its market definitions. Only sales or capacity figures associated with good alternatives should be used in calculating the HHI. In addition, applicants should aggregate the capacity of affiliated companies into one estimate for those affiliates as a single seller.

Alternative Rate Policy Statement, 74 FERC at 61,234 (footnote omitted); see also *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 152 FERC ¶ 61,158 at P 11 & n.10.

³⁸ Application, Ex. I at 9.

eastern Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.³⁹ Golden Triangle states that this is the same geographic market that has been used by various storage applicants located in the same region in prior requests for market-based rates approved by the Commission.⁴⁰ This is also the same geographic market used by Golden Triangle in previous market-based rate applications accepted by the Commission.⁴¹ Golden Triangle also states that the firm and interruptible storage service offered after the proposed expansion are the same services that it currently offers.⁴²

25. We find Golden Triangle's proposed product and geographic markets are appropriate and consistent with Commission precedent.

b. Market Share and Market Concentration

26. Golden Triangle's Market Power Study identifies a total of 66 storage facilities in the relevant geographic market.⁴³ According to Golden Triangle, after the project is placed into service, Golden Triangle will have a 4.5% market share for working gas capacity and a 5.1% market share for daily deliverability, indicating that Golden Triangle cannot exercise market power after the proposed expansion.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Golden Triangle contends that the corresponding HHI of 1,199 and 1,215 for working gas capacity and daily deliverability, respectively, are below the Commission's 1,800 HHI

³⁹ *Id.*, Ex. I at 11.

⁴⁰ *Id.* (citing *LA Storage, LLC*, 180 FERC ¶ 61,188 (2022); *Jefferson Island Storage & Hub, L.L.C.*, 175 FERC ¶ 61,074, at P 11 (2021); *Tallulah Gas Storage, LLC*, 134 FERC ¶ 61,221, at P 32 (2011); *Cadeville Gas Storage LLC*, 132 FERC ¶ 61,115, at P 28 (2010); *Petal Gas Storage, L.L.C.*, 132 FERC ¶ 61,168, at P 26 (2010); *Perryville Gas Storage LLC*, 130 FERC ¶ 61,065, at P 30 (2010)).

⁴¹ *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 121 FERC ¶ 61,313; *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 138 FERC ¶ 61,036; *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 188 FERC ¶ 61,052.

⁴² Application, Ex. I at 10.

⁴³ *Id.*, Ex. I at 14.

⁴⁴ Golden Triangle states that the total working gas capacity and deliverability for the storage facilities in the Gulf Coast Production Area are 1,348,619 MMcf and 49,562 MMcf/day, respectively, and that the working gas capacity and daily deliverability of the Golden Triangle facilities are 61,150 MMcf and 2,540 MMcf/d, respectively. *See id.*, Ex. I, at app. C and D.

threshold, indicating that Golden Triangle will remain unable to exercise market power, either alone or in combination with other sellers.⁴⁵

27. As set forth above, to determine whether additional scrutiny is needed, we examine concentration in the relevant market using HHI. The Alternative Rate Policy Statement states that an HHI of less than 1,800 indicates that sellers cannot exert market power because customers have sufficiently diverse alternatives in the relevant market.⁴⁶ If the HHI is above 1,800 we will give the applicant more scrutiny in order to determine a seller's ability to exercise market power in a more concentrated market.

28. Golden Triangle has shown that, within the relevant market, its market share and market concentration demonstrate that it will lack market power. Golden Triangle's analysis shows that it will continue to have a small market share and its HHI numbers are lower than 1,800. The HHIs of 1,199 and 1,215 for working gas capacity and daily deliverability, respectively, indicate that Golden Triangle is less likely to be able to exert market power because customers have sufficiently diverse alternatives in the relevant market. Furthermore, as shown in the Market Power Study, Golden Triangle's low market shares of 4.5% for working gas capacity and 5.1% for daily deliverability support the conclusion that it lacks market power in the Gulf Coast Production Area.

c. Other Relevant Factors Mitigating Potential Market Power

29. Golden Triangle states that there is a low barrier to enter the market as other storage providers have previously entered and are continuing to enter the market.⁴⁷ Golden Triangle states that it relies on non-affiliated pipelines to transport its customers' natural gas, and that many of these pipelines own and operate their own storage facilities.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Golden Triangle asserts that its market power analysis is conservative because it does not include local production available within or outside of the Gulf Coast Production Area that is accessible to the region via the longer haul pipelines that traverse the region, nor does it include active capacity release markets on

⁴⁵ *Id.*, Ex. I at 8.

⁴⁶ *Alternative Rate Policy Statement*, 74 FERC at 61,235.

⁴⁷ Application, Ex. I at 17.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

the interstate pipelines, pipeline park and loan services, and seasonal services provided by marketers.⁴⁹

30. We find that Golden Triangle's analysis demonstrates that its proposed storage facilities are in a highly competitive area where numerous storage service alternatives exist for potential customers. We also find that Golden Triangle's analysis properly identifies good alternatives. For these reasons, we approve Golden Triangle's request for reaffirmation to charge market-based rates for its proposed firm and interruptible storage and hub services.

31. Additionally, Golden Triangle states that because there are no changes to the capability on which it relies to provide wheeling services, the July 2024 Order's conclusions regarding Golden Triangle's inability to exercise market power over those services remain valid.⁵⁰ We agree and find that Golden Triangle will continue to lack market power for wheeling services and that the project will not affect Golden Triangle's authority to charge market-based rates for its firm and interruptible wheeling services.

d. Change in Circumstances

32. We require that Golden Triangle notify the Commission if future changes in circumstances significantly affect its present market power status, as required by the Commission's regulations.⁵¹ Any event which would affect Golden Triangle's ability to withhold or restrict services or increase its ability to discriminate unduly in price or terms of service must be reported to the Commission within 10 days of acquiring knowledge of any such changes. Failure to timely file a change in circumstance report or to comply with the reporting requirements would constitute a violation of the Commission's regulations. We also reserve the right to require an updated market power analysis at any time.⁵²

2. Requests for Waiver: Filing, Reporting, and Accounting Requirements

33. Golden Triangle requests that the Commission waive certain accounting and reporting requirements which the Commission has previously found are inapplicable to storage providers that are granted market-based rate authority: (1) section 157.6(b)(8)

⁴⁹ *Id.*, Ex. I at 17-18.

⁵⁰ Application at 7 (citing July 2024 Order, 188 FERC ¶ 61,052 at PP 24-26).

⁵¹ 18 C.F.R. § 284.504(b) (2025).

⁵² *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 152 FERC ¶ 61,158 at P 24.

(submission of cost and revenue data); (2) section 157.20(c)(3) (submission of post-construction cost data); (3) sections 157.14(a)(13), (14), (16), and (17) (exhibits relevant to cost-based rates); (4) Part 201 (accounting and reporting requirements); (5) sections 260.1 and 260.2 (related to cost-of-service rate structure, Form 2, and Form 2-A, except for information necessary for assessment of annual charges); (6) section 260.300 (quarterly financial reporting); (7) sections 284.10, 284.7(d), and 284.7(e) (straight fixed-variable rate design methodology); and (8) section 157.14(a)(11) (total gas supply data).

34. We find that the cost-related information required by the cited regulations is not relevant in light of our authorization of market-based rates for Golden Triangle's storage and hub services. Thus, consistent with the Commission's findings in previous orders,⁵³ we grant Golden Triangle's requests for waiver of these accounting and reporting requirements. We clarify that these waivers do not cover the information necessary for the Commission's assessment of annual charges.⁵⁴ Golden Triangle is required to file page 520 of Form No. 2-A, reporting the gas volume information which is the basis for determining the annual charge adjustment. Furthermore, these waivers are subject to revision in the event that the Commission finds cause to re-examine Golden Triangle's market power status or market-based rates. In addition, consistent with the Uniform System of Accounts, we require Golden Triangle to maintain records to separately identify the original cost and related depreciation on its facilities, and to maintain accounts and financial information of its facilities consistent with generally accepted accounting principles should the Commission require Golden Triangle to produce those reports in the future.

C. Engineering Analysis

35. The Commission reviews the design capacity of proposed natural gas facilities to ensure that the design is appropriate. Commission staff completed an engineering analysis of the project. Staff's analysis found that the proposed storage facilities are appropriately designed to support a maximum injection rate of 2,207 MMcf/d and a maximum withdrawal rate of 2,540 MMcf/d. Commission staff concluded that the proposed caverns, cavern wells, and the addition of 55,000 hp at the new compressor building will support the proposed maximum injection and withdrawal rates at the Central Storage Site. However, staff notes that Golden Triangle's existing design

⁵³ See, e.g., *PetroLogistics Nat. Gas Storage, LLC*, 139 FERC ¶ 61,225, at P 31 (2012); *Golden Triangle Storage, Inc.*, 121 FERC ¶ 61,313 at P 36; *Port Barre Invs. L.L.C.*, 116 FERC ¶ 61,052, at PP 32-34 (2006); *Liberty Gas Storage, L.L.C.*, 113 FERC ¶ 61,247, at PP 54-55 (2005).

⁵⁴ See *Wyckoff Gas Storage Co., LLC*, 105 FERC ¶ 61,027, at P 65 (2003).

capacity of its Pipeline Header System supplying the Central Storage Site limits the proposed injection and withdrawal capability to 1,767 MMcf/d and 1,950 MMcf/d, respectively.⁵⁵ Thus, Engineering Condition 2 requires Golden Triangle to submit Pipeline Header System flow diagrams and supporting hydraulic models or outputs for the anticipated operating conditions prior to placing the New Caverns in-service.

36. Caverns 8 and 10 are designed to store up to 8.56 Bcf of working gas and 6.74 Bcf of base gas, for a total storage capacity of 15.30 Bcf of natural gas for each cavern. Caverns 11 and 12 are designed to store up to 6.82 Bcf of working gas and 5.37 Bcf of base gas, for a total storage capacity of 12.19 Bcf of natural gas for each cavern. As a result of this additional capacity, the Central Storage Site will have a total capacity of 99.11 Bcf, a working gas capacity of 61.15 Bcf, and a base gas capacity of 37.96 Bcf.

37. Staff analysis showed that Golden Triangle's proposed cavern locations are within the design criteria and the confinement of the salt formation. The maximum and minimum operating stabilized bottomhole pressures for each cavern correspond to a maximum pressure gradient of 0.85 pounds per square inch per foot (psi/ft) and a minimum pressure gradient of 0.30 psi/ft, respectively.⁵⁶ Engineering Condition 2 in Appendix A to this order requires Golden Triangle to confirm the final maximum and minimum operating pressures for each cavern and file the final bottomhole pressures with the Commission for approval prior to placing each cavern into service.

38. Because salt deforms plastically in relatively short time frames, the caverns will shrink over time. As stated in *A Brief History of Salt Cavern Use*, large volume losses

⁵⁵ Golden Triangle confirms its Pipeline Header System will need additional capacity in the future to fully utilize the maximum injection and withdrawal rates of its Central Storage Site. See Golden Triangle December 8, 2025 Response to Commission Staff's December 1, 2025 Data Request at 3-4. Golden Triangle is planning for three interconnection expansions at existing sites. The three projects are expected to be completed in 2026, well in advance of the proposed December 31, 2028 in-service date of the Spindletop Expansion Project. Completion of these three expansion projects will add 750 MMcf/d (on an equipment rating basis) of capacity to Golden Triangle's Pipeline Header System. On February 12, 2026, the Commission received a prior notice request from Golden Triangle in Docket No. CP26-88-000 to construct and operate a new lateral in Orange and Jefferson Counties, Texas, but has not received any filings for the interconnection expansions.

⁵⁶ The maximum and minimum operating stabilized bottomhole pressures are measured at the casing shoe of each well.

due to salt creep have occurred in natural gas storage caverns.⁵⁷ Further, the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) states that monitoring to demonstrate cavern stability and successful hydrodynamic containment should be carried out throughout the life of the facility.⁵⁸ Accordingly, Engineering Condition 6 in Appendix A to this order requires Golden Triangle to conduct sonar surveys to monitor the caverns' size and shape to ensure that salt creep does not potentially damage the integrity of the caverns, which may result in lost gas and reductions in storage capacity. The IOGCC states “[a]ll gaseous and/or liquid products injected into or withdrawn from the storage facility shall be metered using industry accepted standards. The measurements shall be counterchecked by product level measurement in the cavern (using the level versus volume curve).”⁵⁹ Engineering Condition 7 in Appendix A to this order requires Golden Triangle to file an annual inventory verification study to assist in identification of potential problems with the storage facility.⁶⁰

D. Environmental Analysis

39. On May 5, 2025, the Commission issued a *Notice of Scoping Period Requesting Comments on Environmental Issues for the Proposed Spindletop Expansion Project* (Notice of Scoping). The Notice of Scoping was published in the *Federal Register*⁶¹ and mailed to interested parties including federal, state, and local officials; agency representatives; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; local libraries and newspapers; and affected property owners. The Commission received responsive comments from Tri-Con, Inc. (Tri-Con) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (Texas CEQ). Tri-Con, an adjacent landowner, commented about potential increases in flooding on its property that might result from the project. Texas CEQ commented that air permits, surface and groundwater contamination, and waste disposal procedures should be addressed in the environmental assessment (EA).

⁵⁷ Robert Thomas and Richard Gehle, *A Brief History of Salt Cavern Use*, Solution Mining Research Institute (2000).

⁵⁸ Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, *Hydrocarbon Storage in Mined Caverns: A Guide for State Regulators* (2000).

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ Annual inventory verification studies confirm the actual physical volume of working and cushion gas to detect potential leakage and assess cavern roof integrity to identify issues such as shrinkage and salt creep.

⁶¹ 90 Fed. Reg. 19709 (May 9, 2025).

40. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA),⁶² Commission staff prepared an EA for Golden Triangle’s proposal, which was issued on October 3, 2025.⁶³ The Notice of Availability of the EA established a 30-day comment period and was mailed to interested parties including federal, state, and local officials; agency representatives; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; local libraries and newspapers; and affected property owners. The analysis in the EA addresses geology, soils, water resources, wetlands, vegetation, fisheries, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, land use, recreation, visual resources, cultural resources, air quality, noise, safety, socioeconomics, cumulative effects including climate change, and alternatives. The EA addressed all environmental comments received during scoping and concluded that approval of the project would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.⁶⁴

41. Under NEPA, the Commission considers impacts to all potentially affected communities. Project activities that would affect local communities include construction and operation of four new salt dome natural gas storage caverns and wellpad sites; service corridors with injection/withdrawal pipelines, water supply and brine return piping, instrument air piping, and electrical conduit; gas dehydration equipment, heaters, metering, and other process control equipment; a new 55,000-hp compressor station; and new permanent access roads. The project would affect a total of 81.4 acres of land during construction, including about 36.6 acres of land permanently affected during operation.⁶⁵

⁶² 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*, *see also* 18 C.F.R. pt. 380 (2025) (Commission’s regulations implementing NEPA).

⁶³ For tracking purposes under NEPA, the unique identification number for documents relating to this environmental review is EAXX-019-20-000-1746452768.

⁶⁴ EA at 52. Commission staff could not determine whether the effects from greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions attributable to the project would be significant or insignificant. *Id.* at 49; *see* 42 U.S.C. § 4336(b)(2) (“An agency shall prepare an environmental assessment with respect to a proposed agency action that does not have a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment, or if the significance of such effect is unknown . . .”). We note that NEPA does not require that the Commission formally label project-related GHG emissions as significant or insignificant. *See Citizens Action Coal. of Ind., Inc. v. FERC*, 125 F.4th 229, 241-42 (D.C. Cir. 2025) (holding that “the absence of a ‘significance’ label does not violate NEPA, CEQ guidance, or FERC regulations”) (citing *Food & Water Watch v. FERC*, 104 F.4th 336, 346 (D.C. Cir. 2024) (*East 300*)); *see also Transcon. Gas Pipe Line Co.*, 187 FERC ¶ 61,200, at P 33 (2024) (applying *East 300* in the context of an EA).

⁶⁵ EA at 6, tbl. 1.

42. As described in the EA, the project's potential effects on local communities during construction would include traffic,⁶⁶ noise,⁶⁷ and air quality effects,⁶⁸ all of which would be temporary and less than significant. Golden Triangle's construction activities could temporarily increase local traffic, but its proposed use of traffic control measures as necessary, including warning signs or flagmen along roads to implement safe ingress and egress to and from the project site, would reduce impacts on local communities.⁶⁹ With respect to noise effects, Golden Triangle would limit construction activities to daytime hours whenever feasible, provide traffic control measures where necessary, and install a blowdown silencer.⁷⁰ As stated in the EA, noise modeling demonstrates that construction activity that would occur during nighttime hours would be below a day-night noise level (L_{dn}) of 55 decibels on the A-weighted scale (dBA) at nearby noise sensitive areas.⁷¹ To minimize air quality effects during construction, Golden Triangle would implement its *Fugitive Dust Control Plan*, which includes dust suppression techniques.⁷²

43. The EA also finds that the operation of the project would result in visual,⁷³ air quality,⁷⁴ and noise effects,⁷⁵ all of which would be less than significant. The project's visual effects are minimized by Golden Triangle's project location, which is adjacent to the existing storage/compression facilities and about 0.4 miles from the nearest residence.⁷⁶ As discussed below, operational emissions, when combined with background concentrations, would not result in an exceedance of the National Ambient

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 29-30.

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 37-38.

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 34-35.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 30.

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 38.

⁷¹ *Id.* (analyzing six noise sensitive areas with the nearest located 1,780 feet southwest of Cavern 8).

⁷² *Id.* at 34-35.

⁷³ *Id.* at 28.

⁷⁴ *Id.* at 35-37.

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 39.

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 28.

Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which were developed to be protective of human health and welfare.⁷⁷ As to operational noise effects, Golden Triangle designed the facility with noise attenuating features, such that noise levels attributed to project operations at the nearest noise sensitive areas would also be below a L_{dn} of 55 dBA.⁷⁸ To ensure noise levels are in compliance with applicable noise requirements, the EA recommends, and we require, that Golden Triangle file a noise survey within 60 days after placing the compressor station into service, and that Golden Triangle install additional noise controls if sound levels are exceeded.

44. The EA recommends implementation of Golden Triangle's proposed construction procedures and mitigation measures and Commission staff recommendations,⁷⁹ which we have adopted as conditions in Appendix B of this order.

1. Response to Comments on the EA

45. The Commission received two comments on the EA, from Texas CEQ⁸⁰ and Tri-Con.⁸¹ The comments raise concerns regarding waste disposal,⁸² air quality, water contamination, and flooding, which we respond to below. Golden Triangle filed a response to Tri-Con's comment.⁸³

⁷⁷ *Id.* at 35.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 39; *see also* Golden Triangle June 17, 2025 Response to Staff's May 28, 2025 Information Request at 14. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that a L_{dn} of 55 dBA sufficiently safeguards the public from indoor and outdoor activity noise interference.

⁷⁹ EA at 52-56.

⁸⁰ *See* Texas CEQ November 18, 2025 Comment.

⁸¹ *See* Tri-Con November 3, 2025 Comment.

⁸² Texas CEQ reiterates its earlier comment, noting that waste should be appropriately disposed of at an authorized facility. As addressed in the EA, Golden Triangle will dispose of waste in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations. EA at 15-16.

⁸³ *See* Golden Triangle November 10, 2025 Response to Tri-Con's Comment.

a. Air Quality

46. Texas CEQ comments that the Commission should determine whether the proposed action is subject to federal general conformity requirements for ozone because Texas CEQ is currently assessing reinstating Jefferson County's general conformity requirements for the ozone NAAQS pursuant to *South Coast Air Quality Management District v. EPA*.⁸⁴ Under the Clean Air Act, if a federal agency's action will likely exceed emissions thresholds in nonattainment or maintenance areas,⁸⁵ the agency must prepare a conformity analysis and mitigate project emissions to ensure its action does not impede the state's NAAQS attainment.⁸⁶

47. In the EA, Commission staff stated that Jefferson County is currently in attainment for all six criteria pollutants.⁸⁷ We clarify here that Jefferson County is considered a maintenance area for one criteria pollutant, the revoked 1997 eight-hour ozone NAAQS. However, the ozone precursor pollutants from project construction are below the *de minimis* thresholds established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for triggering general conformity applicability.⁸⁸ Specifically, the estimated ozone precursor pollutants from project construction are 9.92 and 3.91 tons per year of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, respectively, over five years.⁸⁹ Based on the foregoing, a general conformity analysis is not required and we further note that the project is not expected to impede the state's ozone NAAQS attainment.

b. Water Contamination

48. Texas CEQ recommends that Golden Triangle ensure that best management practices are implemented to control runoff to prevent construction impacts to surface

⁸⁴ 882 F.3d 1138 (D.C. Cir. 2018) (finding portions of an EPA rule revoking the 1997 ozone NAAQS and implementing the 2008 ozone NAAQS violated the Clean Air Act's anti-backsliding requirements for certain nonattainment areas).

⁸⁵ See 40 C.F.R. § 93.153(b)(2) (2025) (providing the general conformity applicability thresholds).

⁸⁶ *S. Coast Air Quality Mgmt. Dist. v. FERC*, 621 F.3d 1085, 1099 (9th Cir. 2010) (citing 40 C.F.R. §§ 93.150(b), 93.153(a)-(b) (2025)).

⁸⁷ EA at 31, 34 (2025).

⁸⁸ 40 C.F.R. § 93.153.

⁸⁹ EA at 35.

and ground water resources.⁹⁰ Texas CEQ agrees with the EA that the project would not result in significant long-term environmental impacts as proposed in accordance with applicable permits and laws. The EA describes measures Golden Triangle would implement to prevent surface and groundwater contamination, including adherence to the Commission's *Upland Erosion Control, Revegetation, and Maintenance Plan* and *Wetland and Waterbody Construction and Mitigation Procedures*; adherence to Golden Triangle's project-specific *Unanticipated Discovery Plan for Contaminated Soils or Groundwater Plan*; and development of an *Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan* prior to construction.⁹¹ The EA concludes that these measures and compliance with applicable federal and state regulations and permits would adequately minimize the potential for contamination to affect groundwater or surface water resources.⁹² We agree.

c. **Flooding**

49. Tri-Con asserts that the EA understates its drainage concerns and relies on incomplete and inaccurate information.⁹³ Specifically, Tri-Con is concerned that the proposed project would exacerbate existing drainage and flooding issues to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) West Port Arthur Road drainage ditch and ultimately its property. Tri-Con describes the drainage and flooding issues resulting from even moderate rain events due to the existing drainage from the proposed project site, which it asserts reduces the drainage capacity of the TxDOT ditch.⁹⁴ Tri-Con contends that the EA does not meaningfully address the existing conditions, the cumulative effects, or why the impact on drainage would not be significant. Tri-Con asserts that to support these determinations, hydrologic or hydraulic modeling is necessary to evaluate the drainage burden caused by the increase in impervious surfaces. Tri-Con requests specific, enforceable, technical mitigation measures, such as installing a dedicated pump

⁹⁰ Texas CEQ November 18, 2025 Comment at 1.

⁹¹ EA at 8.

⁹² *Id.* at 15-19.

⁹³ Tri-Con November 3, 2025 Comment at 1.

⁹⁴ For example, Tri-Con states that its property flooded during Tropical Storm Imelda in September 2019 in part because the local drainage infrastructure was already operating at or near full capacity before the storm due to continuous discharge from the proposed project site into the TxDOT ditch. *Id.* at 5.

station to dewater the project site by diverting excess surface water to the McFaddin Ditch on the northeast side of the project site.⁹⁵

50. In response, Golden Triangle states that TxDOT's 1996 EA for the TxDOT ditch indicates that TxDOT designed the ditch for 100-year flood events and anticipated that during such flooding events the roadway would be inundated.⁹⁶ Golden Triangle further avers that the TxDOT EA and construction plans indicate that the TxDOT ditch receives runoff from a 597-acre drainage area east of the railroad berm, which includes the proposed project area. Golden Triangle asserts that the 1.8 acres of proposed new impervious surfaces of the project represent 0.3% of the 597-acre drainage area, and that accepted methodologies, such as the Soil Conservation Service Curve Number Method,⁹⁷ indicate an increase in impervious surfaces of 0.3% for a 597-acre watershed would not likely result in a significant increase in the watershed's expected runoff.

51. As noted in the EA, Golden Triangle does not currently use or maintain the drainage channel, which is identified as waterbody SC005, that discharges to culverts under the railroad berm at the west edge of the proposed project site and into the TxDOT ditch that has flooded Tri-Con's property in the past.⁹⁸ Given that the drainage and flooding conditions Tri-Con raises are pre-existing and the drainage channel is designed to flood without causing damage to the roadway or ditch, we conclude that Tri-Con's comments describe the baseline conditions that would be present regardless of whether the project was constructed. Furthermore, using multiple methods, including TxDOT's Curve Number Loss Model,⁹⁹ Commission staff estimated that runoff from the watershed would increase between 0.1% and 2.3%, assuming rainfall events ranging from 2 to 30 inches. Based on staff's runoff estimates, we agree with Golden Triangle's

⁹⁵ Tri-Con notes that excess water was historically managed in that manner, and that remnants of the former drainage infrastructure remain in place. *Id.* at 8.

⁹⁶ Golden Triangle November 10, 2025 Response to Tri-Con's Comment at 3-4. Golden Triangle notes that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' wetland determination indicates that the ditch and surrounding area have been saturated for over 30 years. *Id.* at 3.

⁹⁷ The Soil Conservation Service Curve Number Method is an empirical surface runoff estimation method developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly called the Soil Conservation Service.

⁹⁸ EA at 17.

⁹⁹ TxDOT uses a modified version of the Soil Conservation Service Curve Number Method in which the model is simplified to represent typical conditions in Texas by fixing a coefficient that is variable in the standard equations.

assertion that various methodologies for estimating the additional project runoff from the 1.8-acre increase of impervious surfaces indicate that the project would not likely result in a significant increase in the watershed's expected runoff into the ditch. As noted in the EA, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps designate the project area in a zone with minimal flood risk and mitigation is not required to maintain the current conditions.¹⁰⁰

d. Endangered Species Act

52. By letter dated January 9, 2026, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurred with Commission staff's determination that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the whooping crane.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Endangered Species Act consultation with the FWS is complete and the EA's recommended Environmental Condition 14, which required that construction activities not begin until consultation with FWS is complete, has been satisfied. Therefore, the condition is not included in Appendix B to this order.

2. Environmental Analysis Conclusion

53. We have reviewed the information and analysis contained in the EA, as well as the other information in the record, regarding potential environmental effects of the project. We accept the environmental recommendations in the EA, as modified herein, and include them as conditions in Appendix B to this order. Based on the analysis in the EA, as supplemented or clarified herein, we conclude that if constructed and operated in accordance with Golden Triangle's application and supplements, and in compliance with the environmental conditions in Appendix B to this order, our approval of this proposal would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.¹⁰²

54. Compliance with the environmental conditions appended to our orders is integral to ensuring that the environmental impacts of approved projects are consistent with those anticipated by our environmental analyses. Thus, Commission staff carefully reviews all information submitted. Only when satisfied that the applicant has complied with all applicable conditions will a notice to proceed with the activity to which the conditions are relevant be issued. We also note that the Commission has the authority to take whatever

¹⁰⁰ EA at 18.

¹⁰¹ Golden Triangle January 22, 2026 Comment at 5 (providing FWS's Concurrence Letter).

¹⁰² We are not making a significance determination regarding GHG effects for the reasons discussed in *supra* note 65.

steps are necessary to ensure the protection of environmental resources during construction and operation of the project, including authority to impose any additional measures deemed necessary to ensure continued compliance with the intent of the conditions of the order, as well as the avoidance or mitigation of unforeseen adverse environmental impacts resulting from project construction and operation.

E. Conclusion

55. We find that Golden Triangle has demonstrated a need for its Spindletop Expansion Project.¹⁰³ Further, the project will not have adverse impacts on Golden Triangle's existing customers or other pipelines or storage providers and their existing customers, and the project's benefits will outweigh any adverse effects on landowners and surrounding communities. The Commission recognizes that the proposed project would impact the environment and individuals living in the vicinity of the project facilities, but that the project impacts, as mitigated, would not be significant. We have analyzed the technical aspects of the project and conclude that it has been appropriately designed to achieve its intended purpose. Based on the discussion above, we conclude that, under section 7 of the NGA, the public convenience and necessity requires approval of the Spindletop Expansion Project, subject to the conditions in this order.

56. Any state or local permits issued with respect to the jurisdictional facilities authorized herein must be consistent with the conditions of this certificate. The Commission encourages cooperation between interstate pipelines and local authorities. However, this does not mean that state and local agencies, through application of state or local laws, may prohibit or unreasonably delay the construction or operation of facilities approved by this Commission.¹⁰⁴

57. The Commission, on its own motion, received and made a part of the record in this proceeding all evidence, including the application, as supplemented, and exhibits thereto, and all comments, and upon consideration of the record,

¹⁰³ See *supra* P 16.

¹⁰⁴ See 15 U.S.C. § 717r(d) (state or federal agency's failure to act on a permit considered to be inconsistent with Federal law); see also *Schneidewind v. ANR Pipeline Co.*, 485 U.S. 293, 310 (1988) (state regulation that interferes with FERC's regulatory authority over the transportation of natural gas is preempted) and *Dominion Transmission, Inc. v. Summers*, 723 F.3d 238, 245 (D.C. Cir. 2013) (noting that state and local regulation is preempted by the NGA to the extent it conflicts with federal regulation, or would delay the construction and operation of facilities approved by the Commission).

The Commission orders:

(A) A certificate of public convenience and necessity is issued to Golden Triangle Storage, LLC (Golden Triangle), authorizing it to construct and operate the Spindletop Expansion Project, as described and conditioned herein, and as more fully described in the application and subsequent filings by the applicant, including any commitments made therein.

(B) The certificate authority in Ordering Paragraph (A) is conditioned on Golden Triangle's:

- (1) completion of the construction of the proposed facilities and making them available for service within six years of the date of this order, pursuant to section 157.20(b) of the Commission's regulations;
- (2) compliance with all applicable Commission regulations, particularly the general terms and conditions set forth in Parts 154, 157, and 284, and paragraphs (a), (c), (e), and (f) of section 157.20 of the Commission's regulations;
- (3) compliance with the engineering conditions in Appendix A of this order; and
- (4) compliance with the environmental conditions in Appendix B of this order.

(C) Golden Triangle's request for reaffirmation of its authorization to charge market-based rates for the storage and hub services is approved, as discussed in this order.

(D) Pursuant to section 284.504(b) of the Commission's regulations, Golden Triangle must notify the Commission within 10 days of acquiring knowledge of significant changes that could affect its market power. The notification must include a detailed description of any new facilities and their relationship to Golden Triangle.

(E) Golden Triangle is granted waiver of the Commission regulations that are not applicable to storage providers with market-based rate authority, as discussed in this order.

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(F) Golden Triangle shall notify the Commission's environmental staff by telephone or e-mail of any environmental noncompliance identified by other federal, state, or local agencies on the same day that such agency notifies Golden Triangle. Golden Triangle shall file written confirmation of such notification with the Secretary of the Commission within 24 hours.

By the Commission.

(S E A L)

Carlos D. Clay,
Deputy Secretary.

Appendix A**Engineering Conditions**

1. The following engineering conditions shall apply to Golden Triangle Storage, LLC's Central Storage Site:

- a. The total capacity of natural gas stored at the Central Storage Site shall not exceed the certificated levels of 99.11 Bcf at 14.73 psia and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- b. The total capacity for each cavern shall not exceed the certificated levels in the table below at 14.73 psia and 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cavern	Total Capacity, Bcf	Working Gas Capacity, Bcf	Base Gas Capacity, Bcf
8	15.30	8.56	6.74
10	15.30	8.56	6.74
11	12.19	6.82	5.37
12	12.19	6.82	5.37

- c. The maximum gas storage shut-in stabilized pressure measured at the casing shoe and corresponding to a pressure gradient of 0.85 psi/ft shall be:

Cavern	Maximum Pressure, psia
8	3,670
10	3,670
11	3,670
12	3,670

- d. The minimum gas storage shut-in stabilized pressure measured at the casing shoe and corresponding to a pressure gradient of 0.30 psi/ft shall be:

Cavern	Minimum Pressure, psia
8	1,305
10	1,305
11	1,305
12	1,305

- e. The maximum injection rate of the Central Storage Site shall be 2,207 MMcf/d.

- f. The maximum injection rate for each Central Storage Site salt storage cavern shall not exceed 625 MMcf/d.
 - g. The maximum withdrawal rate of the Central Storage Site shall be 2,540 MMcf/d.
 - h. The maximum withdrawal rate for each Central Storage Site salt storage cavern shall not exceed 625 MMcf/d.
2. The final storage operating parameters (total, working, and base capacities, maximum and minimum bottomhole pressures at the casing shoe, and maximum injection and withdrawal rates) for each cavern shall be determined after construction of each cavern (including data work papers to support the actual operating capacity determination). Golden Triangle shall file with the Secretary of the Commission each cavern's final storage operating parameters for approval before commencing natural gas storage operations. Additionally, Golden Triangle shall file with the Secretary a system flow diagram of its Pipeline Header System and supporting hydraulic models or outputs covering early and late season injection scenarios and all operating pressure profiles before commencing natural gas storage operations of Caverns 8, 10, 11, and 12.
3. Golden Triangle shall operate its facility in such manner as to prevent/minimize gas loss or migration.
4. Golden Triangle shall establish and maintain a subsidence network over the proposed new caverns storage area.
5. Golden Triangle shall periodically log Caverns 8, 10, 11, and 12 wells to check casing integrity.
6. Golden Triangle shall conduct sonar surveys of Caverns 8, 10, 11, and 12 every five years to:
 - a. monitor their dimensions and shape, including the cavern roof,
 - b. estimate pillar thickness between caverns throughout the storage operations, and
 - c. file the results with the Commission. In the alternative, no less than 30 days before placing the cavern into service, Golden Triangle may file with the Commission, for prior approval of the methodology, a detailed cavern integrity monitoring plan that is consistent with the intent of the sonar survey.
7. Golden Triangle shall conduct an annual inventory verification study for each cavern.
8. Before commencing natural gas storage operations in each cavern, Golden Triangle shall:
 - a. conduct Mechanical Integrity Tests (MIT) on each cavern, and file with the Secretary of the Commission the results of the MITs and confirmation

- from Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) that the results meet RRC standards.
- b. File with the Secretary of the Commission a statement confirming compliance with RRC's regulations prior to placing a cavern into service. File with the Secretary of the Commission all RRC permits referenced in Resource Report 1, Table 1.10-1.
 - c. File with the Secretary of the Commission a statement confirming the placement of the casing shoe and construction of the cavern neck meet the design requirements submitted by Golden Triangle for each cavern.
 - d. File with the Secretary of the Commission the results of any new sonar surveys of Caverns 8, 10, 11, and 12, including plan view and cross-sections.
 - e. File with the Secretary of the Commission copies of well logs including Neutron logs, Gamma Ray logs, Cement Bond and Caliper logs for Cavern Wells 8, 10, 11, and 12.
 - f. File with the Secretary of the Commission a casing inspection base log or an equivalent survey or test obtained over the entire cased interval for the innermost string of Cavern Wells 8, 10, 11, and 12.
 - g. File with the Secretary of the Commission copies of the latest interferences, tracer surveys, or other testing or analysis on the caverns, to verify the lack of communication between the caverns.
 - h. File with the Secretary of the Commission the volume of rubble at the base of each cavern, including the methodology for determining such volume; and
 - i. File with the Secretary of the Commission geological cross sections (when additional data is obtained) through the total project area showing all geologic units.
9. Twice annually, Golden Triangle shall conduct a leak detection test during storage operations to determine the integrity of each cavern/wellbore, casing, and wellhead. In addition, Golden Triangle shall file a report with the Secretary of the Commission summarizing the results of these tests until one year after the operating capacities of Caverns 8, 10, 11, and 12 have reached the maximum defined in Engineering Condition (1)(a).
 10. Golden Triangle shall file with the Secretary of the Commission semi-annual reports (to coincide with the termination of the injection and withdrawal cycles) containing the following information in accordance with section 157.214(c) of the Commission's regulations (volumes shall be stated at 14.73 psia and 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and pressures shall be stated in psia):

- a. the daily volumes of natural gas injected into and withdrawn from each cavern;
 - b. the volume of natural gas and the shut-in wellhead pressures for each cavern at the end of the reporting period;
 - c. the maximum daily injection and withdrawal rates experienced for each cavern during the reporting period, including the average working pressure on such maximum days taken at a central measuring point where the total volume injected or withdrawn is measured;
 - d. the results of any tests performed to determine the actual size, configuration, or dimensions of the storage caverns;
 - e. a discussion of current operating problems and conclusions; and
 - f. other data or reports which may aid the Commission in the evaluation of the storage project.
11. Golden Triangle shall file the above semi-annual reports in Engineering Condition 10 in accordance with section 157.214(c) of the Commission's regulations until one year after the storage inventory volume of each cavern has reached or closely approximates the maximum level defined in this order.
 12. Golden Triangle shall file its Integrity Monitoring Program for the Central Storage Site consistent with the parameters outlined in the American Petroleum Institute's Recommended Practice 1170: Design and Operation of Solution-Mined Salt Caverns Used for Natural Gas Storage (as applicable).

Appendix B

Environmental Conditions

As recommended in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and modified herein, this authorization includes the following conditions:

1. Golden Triangle Storage, LLC (Golden Triangle) shall follow the construction procedures and mitigation measures described in its application and supplements (including responses to staff data requests) and as identified in the EA, unless modified by the Order. Golden Triangle must:
 - a. request any modification to these procedures, measures, or conditions in a filing with the Secretary of the Commission (Secretary);
 - b. justify each modification relative to site-specific conditions;
 - c. explain how that modification provides an equal or greater level of environmental protection than the original measure; and
 - d. receive approval in writing from the Director of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP), or the Director's designee, **before using that modification.**

2. The Director of OEP, or the Director's designee, has delegated authority to address any requests for approvals or authorizations necessary to carry out the conditions of the Order, and take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of environmental resources during construction and operation of the Project. This authority shall allow:
 - a. the modification of conditions of the Order;
 - b. stop-work authority; and
 - c. the imposition of any additional measures deemed necessary to ensure continued compliance with the intent of the conditions of the Order as well as the avoidance or mitigation of unforeseen adverse environmental impact resulting from Project construction and operation.

3. **Prior to any construction activities**, Golden Triangle shall file an affirmative statement with the Secretary, certified by a senior company official, that all company personnel, environmental inspectors (EI), and contractor personnel shall be informed of the EIs' authority and have been or will be trained on the

implementation of the environmental mitigation measures appropriate to their jobs **before** becoming involved with construction and restoration activities.

4. The authorized facility location shall be as shown in the EA, as supplemented by filed alignment sheets. **As soon as they are available, and before the start of construction**, Golden Triangle shall file with the Secretary any revised detailed survey alignment maps/sheets at a scale not smaller than 1:6,000 with station positions for all facilities approved by the Order. All requests for modifications of environmental conditions of the Order or site-specific clearances must be written and must reference locations designated on these alignment maps/sheets.

Golden Triangle's exercise of eminent domain authority granted under the Natural Gas Act (NGA) section 7(h) in any condemnation proceedings related to the Order must be consistent with these authorized facilities and locations. Golden Triangle's right of eminent domain granted under NGA section 7(h) does not authorize it to increase the size of its natural gas facilities to accommodate future needs or to acquire a right-of-way for a pipeline to transport a commodity other than natural gas.

5. Golden Triangle shall file with the Secretary detailed alignment maps/sheets and aerial photographs at a scale not smaller than 1:6,000 identifying all route realignments or facility relocations, and staging areas, pipe storage yards, new access roads, and other areas that would be used or disturbed and have not been previously identified in filings with the Secretary. Approval for each of these areas must be explicitly requested in writing. For each area, the request must include a description of the existing land use/cover type, documentation of landowner approval, whether any cultural resources or federally listed threatened or endangered species would be affected, and whether any other environmentally sensitive areas are within or abutting the area. All areas shall be clearly identified on the maps/sheets/aerial photographs. Each area must be approved in writing by the Director of OEP, or the Director's designee, **before construction in or near that area**.

This requirement does not apply to extra workspaces allowed by the Commission's *Upland Erosion Control, Revegetation, and Maintenance Plan* and/or minor field realignments per landowner needs and requirements that do not affect other landowners or sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands.

Examples of alterations requiring approval include all route realignments and facility location changes resulting from:

- a. implementation of cultural resources mitigation measures;

- b. implementation of endangered, threatened, or special concern species mitigation measures;
 - c. recommendations by state regulatory authorities; and
 - d. agreements with individual landowners that affect other landowners or could affect sensitive environmental areas.
6. **Within 60 days of the acceptance of the authorization and before construction begins**, Golden Triangle shall file an Implementation Plan with the Secretary for review and written approval by the Director of OEP, or the Director's designee. Golden Triangle must file revisions to the plan as schedules change. The plan shall identify:
- a. how Golden Triangle would implement the construction procedures and mitigation measures described in its application and supplements (including responses to staff data requests), identified in the EA, and required by the Order;
 - b. how Golden Triangle would incorporate these requirements into the contract bid documents, construction contracts (especially penalty clauses and specifications), and construction drawings so that the mitigation required at each site is clear to on-site construction and inspection personnel;
 - c. the number of EIs assigned, and how the company would ensure that sufficient personnel are available to implement the environmental mitigation;
 - d. company personnel, including EIs and contractors, who would receive copies of the appropriate material;
 - e. the location and dates of the environmental compliance training and instructions Golden Triangle would give to all personnel involved with construction and restoration (initial and refresher training as the project progresses and personnel change);
 - f. the company personnel (if known) and specific portion of Golden Triangle's organization having responsibility for compliance;
 - g. the procedures (including use of contract penalties) Golden Triangle would follow if noncompliance occurs; and
 - h. for each discrete facility, a Gantt or PERT chart (or similar Project scheduling diagram), and dates for the:
 - (1) completion of all required surveys and reports;
 - (2) environmental compliance training of on-site personnel;

- (3) start of construction; and
 - (4) start and completion of restoration.
7. Golden Triangle shall employ at least one EI for the Project. The EI(s) shall be:
 - a. responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with all mitigation measures required by the Order and other grants, permits, certificates, or other authorizing documents;
 - b. responsible for evaluating the construction contractor's implementation of the environmental mitigation measures required in the contract (see condition 6 above) and any other authorizing document;
 - c. empowered to order correction of acts that violate the environmental conditions of the Order, and any other authorizing document;
 - d. a full-time position, separate from all other activity inspectors;
 - e. responsible for documenting compliance with the environmental conditions of the Order, as well as any environmental conditions/permit requirements imposed by other federal, state, or local agencies; and
 - f. responsible for maintaining status reports.
8. **Beginning with the filing of its Implementation Plan**, Golden Triangle shall file updated status reports with the Secretary on a **monthly** basis until all construction and restoration activities are complete. Upon request, these status reports shall also be provided to other federal and state agencies with permitting responsibilities. Status reports shall include:
 - a. an update on Golden Triangle's efforts to obtain the necessary federal authorizations;
 - b. the construction status of the Project, work planned for the following reporting period, and any schedule changes for stream crossings or work in other environmentally sensitive areas;
 - c. a listing of all problems encountered and each instance of noncompliance observed by the EI(s) during the reporting period (both for the conditions imposed by the Commission and any environmental conditions/permit requirements imposed by other federal, state, or local agencies);
 - d. a description of the corrective actions implemented in response to all instances of non-compliance;
 - e. the effectiveness of all corrective actions implemented;

- f. a description of any landowner/resident complaints that may relate to compliance with the requirements of the Order, and the measures taken to satisfy their concerns; and
 - g. copies of any correspondence received by Golden Triangle from other federal, state, or local permitting agencies concerning instances of non-compliance, and Golden Triangle's response.
9. Golden Triangle must receive written authorization from the Director of OEP, or the Director's designee, **before commencing construction of any Project facilities**. To obtain such authorization, Golden Triangle must file with the Secretary documentation that it has received all applicable authorizations required under federal law (or evidence of waiver thereof).
10. Golden Triangle must receive written authorization from the Director of OEP, or the Director's designee, **before placing the Project into service**. Such authorization will only be granted following a determination that rehabilitation and restoration of the right-of-way and other areas affected by the Project are proceeding satisfactorily.
11. **Within 30 days of placing the authorized facilities in service**, Golden Triangle shall file an affirmative statement with the Secretary, certified by a senior company official:
 - a. that the facilities have been constructed in compliance with all applicable conditions, and that continuing activities would be consistent with all applicable conditions; or
 - b. identifying which of the conditions in the Order Golden Triangle has complied with or will comply with. This statement shall also identify any areas affected by the Project where compliance measures were not properly implemented, if not previously identified in filed status reports, and the reason for non-compliance.
12. Golden Triangle shall **not begin** construction activities **until** it files with the Secretary a copy of the determination of consistency with the Coastal Zone Management Plan issued by the Texas General Land Office.
13. **Within 5 days of receipt of a water quality certification issued by the Railroad Commission of Texas**, Golden Triangle shall file the complete certification, including all conditions. All conditions attached to the water quality certification constitute mandatory conditions of the Certificate Order. **Prior to construction**, Golden Triangle shall file, for review and written approval of the Director of OEP,

or the Director's designee, any revisions to its project design necessary to comply with the water quality certification conditions.

14. Golden Triangle shall file a noise survey with the Secretary **no later than 60 days** after placing the new compressor station in service. If a full load condition noise survey is not possible, Golden Triangle shall provide an interim survey at the maximum possible horsepower load and provide the full load survey **within 6 months**. If the noise attributable to the operation of the equipment at the new compressor station under interim or full horsepower load conditions exceeds a day-night sound level of 55 decibels on the A-weighted scale at any nearby noise sensitive areas, Golden Triangle shall file a report on what changes are needed and shall install the additional noise controls to meet the level **within 1 year** of the in-service date. Golden Triangle shall confirm compliance with the above requirement by filing a second noise survey with the Secretary **no later than 60 days** after it installs the additional noise controls.

Document Content(s)

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