

or step-plus-function construction, as the invocation of 35 U.S.C. 112(f) affects claim scope. Drafting claims with limitations that comply with 35 U.S.C. 112(f) can be beneficial to applicants by allowing them to recite a function in a claim and rely on the specification for the corresponding structure, material, or acts that perform the function and equivalents to the disclosed structure, material, or acts. This technique permits the claim drafter to avoid specific identification of the means or step for performing a claimed function in the claim itself by offering a shorthand that can point to a more robust description of the means or step in the specification.

When a patent examiner determines that, under the broadest reasonable interpretation of a claim, a limitation invokes 35 U.S.C. 112(f), the limitation must be limited to the structure, material, or acts described in the specification as performing the entire claimed function and equivalents to the disclosed structure, material, or acts. As a result, 35 U.S.C. 112(f) limitations will, in some cases, be afforded a narrower interpretation than a limitation that is not crafted in means-plus-function format. This is an important distinction when searching for and applying prior art. The memorandum highlights the special considerations for the examination of claims with 35 U.S.C. 112(f) limitations.

The memorandum also reminds patent examiners that the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) (9th Edition, Rev. 07.2022, February 2023) includes the latest examination guidance concerning 35 U.S.C. 112(f) in sections 2181–2187. The memorandum to patent examiners provides a summary of important points related to examining claims having 35 U.S.C. 112(f) limitations and provides the specific MPEP sections noted for more thorough information on each topic. The memorandum addresses: (1) the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 112(f); (2) claim interpretation and the importance of a clear record; and (3) adequate support, specifically to satisfy the requirements of definiteness, written description, and enablement.

Additionally, the memorandum explains that refresher training on 35 U.S.C. 112(f) is available to patent examiners. Training is also available to the public at www.uspto.gov/patents/laws/examination-policy/examination-guidance-and-training-materials.

Feedback on 35 U.S.C. 112(f) guidance is welcome. Instructions for

submitting feedback are provided in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

Katherine K. Vidal,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2024–05798 Filed 3–19–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–16–P

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Agricultural Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) announces that on April 11, 2024, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (Central Daylight Time), the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC or Committee) will hold an in-person public meeting at the Sheraton Overland Park Hotel in Overland Park, KS, with options for the public to attend virtually. At this meeting, the AAC will discuss topics related to the agricultural economy and recent developments in the agricultural derivatives markets.

DATES: The meeting will be held on April 11, 2024, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (Central Daylight Time). Members of the public who wish to submit written statements in connection with the meeting should submit them by April 18, 2024.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place at the Sheraton Overland Park Hotel, 6100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS. You may submit public comments, identified by “Agricultural Advisory Committee,” through the CFTC website at <https://comments.cftc.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments through the Comments Online process on the website. If you are unable to submit comments online, contact Swati Shah, Designated Federal Officer, via the contact information listed below to discuss alternate means of submitting your comments. Any statements submitted in connection with the committee meeting will be made available to the public, including publication on the CFTC website, <https://www.cftc.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Swati Shah, AAC Designated Federal Officer, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street NW, Washington, DC; (202) 418–5042; or aac@cftc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting will be open to the public with seating on a first-come, first-served

basis. Members of the public may also listen to the meeting by telephone by calling a domestic or international toll or toll-free number to connect to a live, listen-only audio feed. Call-in participants should be prepared to provide their first name, last name, and affiliation.

Domestic Toll-Free Numbers: 833–568–8864 or 833–435–1820.

Domestic Toll Numbers: 1–669–254–5252 or 1–646–964 1167 or 1–646–828–7666 or 1–669–216–1590 or 1–415–449–4000 or 1–551–285–1373.

International Toll- and Toll-Free Numbers: Will be posted on the CFTC’s website, <https://www.cftc.gov>, on the page for the meeting, under Related Links.

Call-In/Webinar ID: 160 831 3224.

Pass Code/Pin Code: 031806.

Members of the public may also view a live webcast of the meeting via the <http://www.cftc.gov/> website. The meeting agenda may change to accommodate other Committee priorities. For agenda updates, please visit <https://www.cftc.gov/About/AdvisoryCommittees/AAC>.

After the meeting, a transcript of the meeting will be published through a link on the CFTC’s website, <http://www.cftc.gov>. Persons requiring special accommodations to attend the meeting because of a disability should notify the contact person above.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 1009(a)(2).)

Dated: March 14, 2024.

Robert Sidman,

Deputy Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 2024–05819 Filed 3–19–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6351–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Presidential Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans

AGENCY: White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans, Office of the Secretary, Department of Education.

ACTION: Announcement of an open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the agenda for the April 4–5, 2024, open meeting of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans (PAC) and provides information to members of the public about how to attend the meeting and submit written comments related to the work of the PAC.

DATES: The PAC will meet on April 4, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. E.D.T. and on April 5, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The Laborer's District Council Training and Learning Center located at 1333 N Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19122. The public may view the meeting virtually or attend in-person.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Monique Toussaint, Designated Federal Official, U.S. Department of Education, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202; telephone: (202) 260-0964, email: monique.toussaint@ed.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

PAC's Statutory Authority and Function: The PAC is established by Executive Order 14050 (October 19, 2021) and is continued by Executive Order 14109 (September 29, 2023). The PAC is governed by the provisions of 5 U.S.C. chapter 10, which sets forth standards for the formation and use of advisory committees. The purpose of the PAC is to advise the President, through the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, on all matters pertaining to advancing educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity for Black Americans and communities.

The PAC shall advise the President in the following areas: (i) what is needed for the development, implementation, and coordination of educational programs and initiatives at the Department and other agencies to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Black Americans; (ii) how to promote career pathways for in-demand jobs for Black students, including registered apprenticeships, internships, fellowships, mentorships, and work-based learning initiatives; (iii) how to increase public awareness of and generate solutions for the educational and training challenges and equity disparities that Black Americans face and the causes of these challenges; and (iv) approaches to establish local and national partnerships with public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit stakeholders to advance the mission and objectives of Executive Order 14050, consistent with applicable law. Notice of the meeting is required by 5 U.S.C. chapter 10 (Federal Advisory Committees) and is intended to notify the public of its opportunity to attend.

Meeting Agenda: On April 4, 2024, the meeting agenda will include welcome remarks; a discussion of the

PAC's function and mission; voting on Commission business as needed; panels by subject matter experts on topics that reflect the priorities outlined in the Executive Order; and a group discussion. The public comment period will begin immediately following the conclusion of panel discussions. Members of the public should follow the instructions below for submitting written comment and providing oral comment at the meeting. On April 5, 2024, the meeting agenda will include working group updates and presentations.

Access to the Meeting: An RSVP is required in order to attend the meeting in-person and/or virtually. Please RSVP at <https://sites.ed.gov/whblackinitiative/our-commission/>. RSVPs for both meeting days must be received by 5:00 p.m. E.D.T. on March 31, 2024. Members of the public that RSVP will get information on how to attend the meeting virtually or in-person as indicated on their registration.

Submission of written comments: The public may submit written comments pertaining to the work of the PAC no later than 5:00 p.m. E.D.T. on March 31, 2024. Members of the public who submit written comments prior to the deadline may read their comments during the public comment segment of the meeting on April 4, 2024. Written comments must be submitted via the registration site or to the whblackinitiative@ed.gov mailbox and include in the subject line "PAC Public Comment." The email must include the name(s), title, organization/affiliation, mailing address, email address, and telephone number, of the person(s) making the comment. Comments should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or in a medium compatible with Microsoft Word (not a PDF file) that is attached to an electronic mail message (email) or provided in the body of an email message. Please do not send material directly to the PAC members.

Access to Records of the Meeting: The Department will post the official report of the meeting on the Initiative's website no later than 90 days after the meeting. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1009, the public may also inspect the meeting materials and other PAC records at 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC, by emailing whblackinitiative@ed.gov to schedule an appointment.

Reasonable Accommodations: The meeting sites are accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you will need an auxiliary aid or service to participate in the meeting (e.g., interpreting service, assistive listening device, or materials in an alternate format), notify the contact person listed

in this notice at least one week before the meeting date. Although we will attempt to meet a request received after that date, we may not be able to make available the requested auxiliary aid or service because of insufficient time to arrange it.

Electronic Access to this Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Authority: Presidential Executive Order 14050.

Alexis Barrett,

Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2024-05892 Filed 3-19-24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP24-83-000]

Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization and Establishing Intervention and Protest Deadline

Take notice that on March 7, 2024, Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern), 1111 South 103rd Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68124-1000, filed in the above referenced docket a prior notice request pursuant to sections 157.205, 157.208, 157.210, and 157.216 of the Commission's regulations under the Natural Gas Act (NGA), and Northern's blanket certificate issued in Docket No. CP82-401-000, for authorization of its West Leg 2024 Expansion Project in Martin County, Minnesota and Dodge County, Nebraska (Project). Specifically, Northern proposes to: (1) construct an approximately 4.53-mile-long extension of its 16-inch-diameter MNM80511 C-line and associated aboveground