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Dominion Cove Point gets more flack from environmentalists

May 10, 2013 | By [Barbara Vergetis Lundin](#)

In January, a Circuit Court decided Dominion Cove Point's agreement with environmental agencies allowed it to build liquefaction facilities inside the plant's fenced area and export liquefied natural gas (LNG) -- even though the Sierra Club had contended that Dominion needed its permission to build. The ruling was looked at as a victory at the time, but that victory was short-lived.

Today, a coalition of local, regional, and national groups is objecting to the environmental impacts allegedly posed by the Dominion Cove Point LNG export terminal on the Chesapeake Bay.

The groups -- Sierra Club, Earthjustice, Patuxent Riverkeeper, Potomac Riverkeeper, Shenandoah Riverkeeper and Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper -- contend that the project would hurt the Bay's economy and ecology, increase air pollution, and hasten fracking and drilling in neighboring states. It also notes that the short-range economic impacts have been widely promoted with "almost no attention" paid to the construction and other long-term environmental impacts on local water quality or quality of life.

"The communities that surround the Chesapeake depend on the Bay and its rivers for our food, livelihood and way of life," said Robin Broder, vice president of Potomac Riverkeeper. "It's unthinkable that federal officials would rubber stamp this project without a careful look at how our Bay and upstream communities and natural resources will be affected by increased fracking for natural gas."

Major concerns include a substantial increase in traffic of LNG tankers on the Bay and to Cove Point, as well as the risks posed by dumping billions of gallons of wastewater into the estuary and its network of rivers, wetlands, and forests.

Late last week, the groups filed [public comments](#) and a [motion to intervene](#) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to conduct a thorough environmental review, or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, of the project.

The proposed terminal will be the only LNG export facility in the east coast, providing foreign markets with access to natural gas from the Marcellus Shale, which lies beneath New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, western Maryland, Shenandoah Valley Virginia, and West Virginia.