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Ohio Utica Shale

## **Eco-groups worried about impacts of Maryland LNG export terminal**

By BOB DOWNING Published: May 6, 2013

From a coalition of eco-groups today:

**WASHINGTON, DC-** A coalition of local, regional, and national groups are objecting to the environmental impacts posed by the proposed Dominion Cove Point liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal on the Chesapeake Bay, saying the project would hurt the Bay's economy and ecology, increase air pollution, and hasten fracking and drilling in neighboring states.

The group – Sierra Club, Earthjustice, Patuxent Riverkeeper, Potomac Riverkeeper, Shenandoah Riverkeeper, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper – filed [public comments](#) and a [motion to intervene](#) in the proceedings late Friday to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) calling on the agency to conduct a thorough environmental review, or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, of the project.

The coalition argues the development of this terminal in Lusby, MD would result in major damage to the Chesapeake Bay, coastal forests, and the local economy, which currently support more than a trillion dollars in economic activity from the seafood and tourism industries.

“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 ship traffic of huge – and potentially explosive – LNG tankers on the Bay and to Cove Point, as well as the risks posed by dumping billions of gallons of wastewater into this large and complex estuary, made up of a network of rivers, wetlands, and forests.

“Instead of rushing to approve this risky project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission needs to take a close look at all the details – particularly when public health and the regional economy is at stake,” said Earthjustice Managing Attorney Deborah Goldberg.

The project will require construction of an additional compressor station in the Elklick Diabase Flatwoods Conservation site, which is home to rare species of plants, animals, and migratory

birds. It also will require a huge construction site on the Patuxent River next to the historic Solomons Island, known for its beautiful waterfront.

“It is appalling that only the short range economic impacts from the expansion of this facility have been widely promoted with almost no attention paid to the construction and other long-term environmental impacts on local water quality or on the quality of life for the people of Calvert County,” said Patuxent Riverkeeper Frederick Tutman. “We are entitled to full review and disclosure of these negative effects in their totality.”

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. Demands for natural gas exports will mean more dangerous fracking in these states, as well as more pollution of the communities' air and water and destruction of their land.

“Gas companies come to our local communities with a big straw and suck out our resources, leaving big scars on our landscape and community. These communities agree to this intrusion largely in the name of patriotism because they want energy independence for the United States,” said Jeff Kelble of Shenandoah Riverkeeper. “But liquefying and selling our precious gas resource to foreign gas companies will further drive development and undermine our national security, while doing nothing to secure energy independence. It's double-timing U.S. citizens! The only ones who stand to benefit from this project are the gas companies. And everyone else – from fishermen in the Shenandoah to residents of towns living downstream of gas fields – will suffer.”

Once in full operation, Dominion Cove Point will also emit thousands of tons of dangerous air pollutants and millions of tons of greenhouse gases that will only add to increased climate disruption.

“The damage that this project would bring to the Maryland coast, communities in states like Pennsylvania, and the American public make it clear that exporting liquefied natural gas is bad news for public health, the environment, and our climate,” said Sierra Club Beyond Natural Gas Campaign Director Deb Nardone. “The Sierra Club does not support LNG exports from Cove Point, and we will continue to legally fight all efforts by Dominion to try and place profits over people.”

“LNG facilities, like the one proposed for Cove Point, are intended to ship natural gas extracted in this country off to foreign lands,” said Michael Helfrich of Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper. “The result is that gas drillers will make more money, while natural gas prices increase for Americans. This shale gas 'gold rush' will ravage communities and the environment with untold miles of new pipelines and infrastructure through the Susquehanna Watershed. It may be a win for the gas drillers, but it throws the idea of American energy independence out the window.”

**Copies of filings submitted to FERC:**

**Public Comments - <http://www.sierraclub.org/pressroom/downloads/Comments-Application-0506.pdf>**

**Motion to Intervene** - <http://www.sierraclub.org/pressroom/downloads/Motion-Intervene-0506.pdf>