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Maryland Delegation Denounces “Conditional” LNG Approval Five Days Before Obama Administration Takes Office

Delegation Vows to Work with Coast Guard, State of Maryland, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County to Investigate Any Possible Way to Halt the Project

WASHINGTON – Members of the Maryland Delegation denounce the “conditional” approval of the proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant at Sparrows Point by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) just five days before the Obama Administration takes office. AES, the company behind the proposal, must satisfy 169 safety, security, and environmental conditions to move forward with the proposal. Members of the Maryland Delegation including **Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)**, **Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)**, **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, and **Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD)** vow to work with the Coast Guard, the State of Maryland, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County to investigate any possible way to halt the project.

“From the start, I have expressed strong concerns over the safety and security of an LNG facility so close to densely populated, residential neighborhoods. My objections have fallen on deaf ears. In an 11th hour decision today, just five days before the Obama Administration takes office, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission quickly approved the proposal that will have a longstanding impact on this area. We will work with all of the agencies involved in this process to investigate ways to stop this plan from moving forward,” said **Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)**.

“For nearly three years, I have repeatedly raised my safety, security and environmental concerns about this LNG facility and pipeline. I am not the only. Several other agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Interior have serious concerns about this project moving forward. And while all evidence seems to be showing that AES and Mid-Atlantic Express, the companies operating this project, are not adequately prepared to address these issues, FERC has decided to rubber stamp this project anyway. In doing so, they’ve chosen to ignore the safety and security of Marylanders. As Maryland’s senior Senator, I will work to ensure every mitigation measure is met and the community is protected,” said **Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)**.

“I am extremely disappointed by FERC’s decision and I will continue to work to find ways to prevent it,” said **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**. “The location of this facility in a highly populated, urban area poises a security and environmental risk to our region.”

“I am deeply troubled that FERC moved forward to approve the LNG terminal at Sparrow’s Point,” said **Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD)**. “The health and safety of Maryland residents must be the top priority and, unfortunately, FERC carelessly chose to overlook this grave concern with its decision.”

LNG is a hazardous fuel that can explode when ignited. The proposed site is less than two miles from the residential neighborhoods of Dundalk, Turner's Station, and Edgemere in Baltimore County. The tankers carrying LNG to the facility would travel under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to reach the facility. In addition, an LNG facility could harm a multi-million dollar revitalization effort on the Eastside of Baltimore County and restrictions on recreational boat traffic could hurt the quality of life of area residents.

In 2008, the Coast Guard found that the Chesapeake Bay is not currently suitable for an LNG facility because sufficient resources are not available to implement the necessary safety and security measures to protect the facility and nearby residents. AES has not created a Transit Management Plan as requested to determine how to adequately mitigate the risks of an accident or possible terrorist attack at the facility. In addition, the Department of the Interior recently determined construction of the plant could threaten the environmentally sensitive area of the Chesapeake Bay.

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