



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2008

**CONTACT:**

Sue Walitsky (Cardin), 202-224-4524

Melissa Schwartz (Mikulski), 202-228-1122

Jennifer Kohl (Cummings), 202-225-4289

Heather Molino (Ruppersberger), 202-225-3061

Makeda Scott (Sarbanes), 202-225-4016

## **TEAM MARYLAND CONDEMNS RULING ON ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY OF LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS SITE**

*Issues joint letter to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski, and Congressmen Elijah E. Cummings, C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger and John Sarbanes (all D-Md.) today condemned the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). In its report, FERC suggests that – with 151 mitigation measures – the proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility at Sparrows Point in Baltimore would “have limited adverse environmental impact and would be an environmentally acceptable action.”

If the Sparrows Point application is approved, LNG tankers would have to travel through the narrowest portions of the Chesapeake Bay, under the Bay Bridge, through heavily used commercial fishing and recreational boating areas, to the mouth of the Port of Baltimore. This is a densely populated area that is less than two miles away from residential communities that are home to more than 65,000 residents.

“FERC’s draft environmental impact statement fails to adequately address the safety issues of locating a LNG facility in a populated, urban area or what the substantial upgrades to security would entail,” said Senator Cardin.

“Federal agencies are all too quick to rubberstamp these facilities, despite the significant and very real concerns of Baltimore residents, the State of Maryland, and this Senator,” said Senator Mikulski. “I am absolutely opposed to an LNG facility in Sparrows Point. I am deeply concerned for the safety of communities surrounding LNG sites and the potential environmental impact of these facilities. I will continue to stand up for Maryland, even as federal agencies rush this process.”

“I am deeply disappointed in FERC’s suggestion that this project could pose little risk to the fragile environment of our Bay. There is simply no amount of mitigation that will make an LNG terminal at Sparrow’s Point favorable to our environment,” Congressman Cummings said. “The proposed terminal, as it currently stands, is unfavorable—for both our environment and for the safety and security of our community. FERC must stop ignoring the serious risks presented to our State by this proposed project.”

“From the very start, I have said the proposed liquefied natural gas plant is absolutely inappropriate for this residential area in Eastern Baltimore County. My biggest concerns focus around the lack of a comprehensive safety and security plan, the potential harm to the quality of life for nearby residents, and the possible negative effects on the environment and the Chesapeake Bay. This Environmental Impact Statement does not alleviate any of my concerns,” said Congressman Ruppertsberger.

“The debate about whether or not to place a LNG facility at Sparrows Point has always hinged on the issue of safety. That should have weighed heavily on FERC’s decision,” said Congressman Sarbanes.

The members will send the following letter to FERC Chairman Joseph T. Kelliher today:

Dear Chairman Kelliher:

We strongly disagree with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) favorable draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the AES Sparrows Point LNG, LLC and Mid-Atlantic Express LLC proposed facility and pipeline.

You have once again decided to ignore our safety, security and environmental concerns about this proposed facility. You also have chosen to ignore the concerns of the State of Maryland and Baltimore County.

The draft EIS provides a road map for AES and Mid-Atlantic to try to minimize the facility and pipeline’s harm to surrounding communities and the fragile Chesapeake Bay watershed. It recommends 151 mitigation measures to limit the project’s environmental impact. This is 151 mitigation measures too many.

Whether the environmental impact of the facility and pipeline’s construction or operation is minimal, limited, temporary or long-term, it cannot be made environmentally acceptable to our State. This project is not welcomed in Maryland.

You can continue to rubberstamp AES Sparrow Point’s application through the FERC review process, but without the support of the State of Maryland, this project will not move forward.

###