

Resolution No.: 17-1004
Introduced: February 4, 2014
Adopted: February 11, 2014

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: Councilmember Leventhal

SUBJECT: Resolution to urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to complete an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Cove Point Liquefied Natural Gas export terminal in Calvert County Maryland

Background

1. Dominion Resources, a Virginia-based company, seeks to build a \$3.8 billion “liquefaction” plant at Cove Point in Calvert County Maryland. The purpose of this facility – which will include construction of a 130-megawatt power plant to run industrial-scale compressors and a heat-exchange system -- is to convert natural gas received from hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” to liquid form at a temperature of minus 260 degrees F. It would then be shipped by tanker ship more than 6,000 miles to India and Japan. Once fully operational, the Cove Point facility could become Maryland’s largest single trigger of greenhouse gases in terms of “life-cycle” emissions from drilling, processing, piping, liquefying, shipping to Asia, re-vaporizing, and end-use combustion.
2. Construction of this facility will most likely lead to higher demand for gas recovered from “fracking,” particularly from the Marcellus Shale basin that extends into Maryland. There are also four other gas basins in Maryland where fracking – induced by rising gas prices – could occur in the near future. These include the “Culpepper Basin” that runs under northern Montgomery County. Meanwhile, the proposed Cove Point facility’s proximity to the Chesapeake Bay raises concerns, given the likelihood of increased ship traffic and potential spills into the Bay water. Also, there are two gas basins that run near or below the Chesapeake Bay that could see fracking due to increased export demand at Cove Point. These include the Taylorsville Basin and the Delmarva Basin.
3. The method of extracting basin gas through fracking is considered environmentally suspect. Hydraulic fracturing has been linked to methane gas contamination in ground water and increased methane in air emissions. Through the process of induced seismicity, “fracking” is also suspected of triggering earthquakes after re-injection of drilling fluids into the ground.

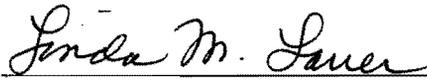
4. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is currently conducting only an Environmental Assessment and not a more probing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the massive Cove Point facility. A full EIS would provide a range of alternatives to the proposed action and would provide an analysis of the environmental impacts of each of the possible alternatives.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland urges the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to go beyond an Environmental Assessment and to complete a full Environmental Impact Statement for the Cove Point Liquefied Natural Gas terminal located in Calvert County Maryland.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council