

Governor Christie Vetoes LNG Offshore Natural Gas Project to Safeguard New Jersey's Environment, Economy and Security

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Contact: Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600

Trenton, NJ – Further demonstrating his commitment to protect New Jersey's coastal waters and natural resources, Governor Chris Christie today invoked his authority under the federal Deepwater Port Act, vetoing a proposed deepwater liquefied natural gas operation 16 miles off the coast of Asbury Park. The action prevents Liberty Natural Gas from constructing and operating its proposed offshore port to receive foreign vessels transporting liquid natural gas (LNG) to the U.S. for regassification.

"I take very seriously our obligation to protect the environmental health of our coastal waters," said Governor Christie. "Offshore LNG poses unacceptable risks to the State's residents, natural resources, economy and security. We must ensure that our 126 miles of shoreline remain an economic driver for tourism and that our fishing and shellfish industries remain healthy and productive now and for future generations."

As outlined in federal filings last September and October, the proposed deepwater port, at which the company would regasify liquefied natural gas for transport onshore, is only one component of Liberty Natural Gas' proposal. The project also would entail construction of a 9.2 mile onshore pipeline from Linden to Perth Amboy, and 44 miles of submerged pipeline designed to transport up to 2.4 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas from the deepwater port to shore.

"New Jersey has invested much time, energy and resources into encouraging renewable energy, and its commitment has made the State one of the leaders in the nation on this front," Governor Christie wrote in his veto letter to David Matsuda, Administrator of the federal Maritime Administration. "The Liberty Natural Gas project could stifle investment in renewable energy technologies by increasing reliance on foreign energy sources, which would undermine all of the progress made by New Jersey to promote sustainable energy."

In addition to potential harmful impacts on recreational and commercial fishing, shellfisheries and tourism industries vital to the State's economy, other reasons for the Christie Administration's opposition to the Liberty Natural Gas proposal include its proximity to large population centers; potential discharges of harmful wastewater into the environment as well as increased homeland security demands on the U.S. Coast Guard and New Jersey's Homeland Security personnel to deal with potential environmental disasters and the disruption of port commerce.

"The Governor continues to prove his commitment to protecting our air, lands, waters and natural resources, and recognizes that the ocean is our most valued treasure," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. "This project just has too many unacceptable risks to our environment and to the safety and welfare of the State's residents."

Last year, Governor Christie announced his strong opposition to oil drilling off the New Jersey coast, and on Earth Day 2010 first publicly stated his opposition to allowing LNG facilities to be located off the State's coast.

A copy of the Governor's veto letter is attached

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