

PRESS RELEASE



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Contacts:

Sean Dixon, Clean Ocean Action, Coastal Policy Attorney (732) 872-0111
Zach McCue, Clean Ocean Action, Citizen Action Coordinator (732) 872-0111
Lindsay McNamara, Clean Ocean Action, Press Inquiries (732) 872-0111

LANDSLIDE CITIZEN OPPOSITION TO LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

*Detailed Analysis Demonstrates Strong Support for Ocean,
Timeline for Project Not Stopped Despite Government Shutdown*

Sandy Hook, NJ – Overall, out of a sea of over 25,350 comments submitted to the Liberty LNG - Port Ambrose docket, only 16 comments supported industrialization of the ocean. This broad opposition to Liberty LNG's Port Ambrose came from concerned citizens across the United States whose input was solicited by the Maritime Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard as part of the federal government's project review process.

Since the close of the public comment period on August 22, Clean Ocean Action has been documenting and sorting through comments to quantify the overwhelming opposition. Environmental concerns topped the list of reasons for opposing Port Ambrose with threats to marine life, water pollution and air pollution imminent with the construction and operation of the port.

"We're not going to trade the future of the ocean, or for that matter the planet, for dirty, cheap energy; not on our watch," proclaimed **Rav Freidel, Director of Concerned Citizens of Montauk**.

In addition, "The partial shutdown of the federal government has shuttered the Coast Guard office handling Port Ambrose, yet the fast tracking of the project continues. When Coast Guard officials return to work, they should immediately extend the 240 day project review period to account for the days lost to political gridlock," said **Jill Wiener of Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy**, a grassroots organization that submitted more than 5,400 letters opposing Port Ambrose.

"The fact that a whole month after the public comment period had closed the federal government is still uploading letters and comments speaks to how opposed to this project the public really is," stated **Clean Ocean Action Ocean Advocacy and Education Fellow Catie Tobin**.

Skepticism regarding the number of jobs that will be created and the desire of Liberty LNG to export natural gas were also major concerns raised. By Liberty's own projections, just 6 permanent jobs would be created for manning the port, even though impacts to tourism, fisheries, renewable energy jobs, and commerce would be put on the line. Although the company claims the port will be used solely for imports, the overwhelming majority of project scoping comments argued that it will eventually lead to exports and increased hydraulic fracturing – two impacts that should be analyzed front and center.

“This project will adversely impact people throughout the region because there seems to be little doubt that if Port Ambrose is built it will be used to export shale gas, and that means increased fracking in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and it could well open up New York State to fracking”, said **Bruce Ferguson of Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy**.

“After all that the Jersey and Long Island shores have been through since Hurricane Sandy, that last thing coastal residents need now is the prospect of a huge natural gas disaster looming just offshore,” said **Jim Walsh, Eastern Region Director of Food & Water Watch**. “Further, this proposal will undoubtedly lead to gas exportation, which would require more dangerous and destructive fracking here at home; it's not fair to the residents of our region,” Walsh concluded.

“If energy independence is our national goal, then neither imports nor exports are in our national interest,” said **Bob Bennekamper, concerned citizen from Brick Township, New Jersey**.

Environmental, economic, and security concerns were raised by New Jersey Governor Christie when he vetoed Liberty Natural Gas's last attempt to construct an LNG facility offshore in 2011, and reaffirmed his veto for an alternate location (Port Ambrose's current proposed location) in 2012. Both Governor Christie and Governor Cuomo can veto the current project, which is governed by the federal Deepwater Port Act. Groups are now mobilizing to put pressure on both Governors to veto.

“Given the myriad reasons this Port shouldn't be built, the scores of data gaps, inadequate studies, and outdated energy analyses identified by thousands of concerned citizens across the nation, the federal agencies reviewing this proposal should stop officially processing the application until these questions are answered,” said **Sean Dixon, Coastal Policy Attorney with Clean Ocean Action**, who, with other organizations in this coalition, has submitted multiple requests to the federal government for a 'stopped clock' on this proposal's review. Under the Deepwater Port Act, application review, once initiated, is only open for public involvement for a 240 day clock. “We're over 100 days into this Port's processing, yet the 'clock' wasn't stopped on this project before the federal government shut-down,” continued Dixon; “this is a significant failure in good governance that will lead to the voice of the public being curtailed and ignored.”

For more information, visit www.cleanoceanaction.org.

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About Clean Ocean Action

Clean Ocean Action is a coalition of over 130 boating, business, community, conservation, diving, environmental, fishing, religious, service, student, surfing, and women's groups. Based in Sandy Hook, COA is the only full time regional coalition that works exclusively for a clean ocean off the coasts of New Jersey and New York.