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South Texas Residents to Rally Against Proposed LNG Export Terminals at FERC Hearing

PORT ISABEL, Texas — Residents opposed to three proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminals near South Padre Island will air their concerns publicly at a hearing hosted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Tuesday, August 11, 2015, from 5:00pm to 8:00pm at the Port Isabel Event and Cultural Center, 309 E. Railroad in Port Isabel.

Citing the need for “efficiency” and to “avoid grandstanding,” FERC has decided to record the comments of South Texas residents in private with a stenographer, rather than allowing them to speak their comments publicly before an audience.

A coalition of local residents called *Save RGV from LNG*, along with the Sierra Club, see FERC’s decision as stifling the open debate and discussion that such enormous project proposals require.

The Sierra Club and Save RGV from LNG will provide an opportunity to make these comments public by speaking them aloud just outside of the hearing venue. Spoken comments will be recorded, and copies will be provided to FERC for entry into the project dockets.

“These are enormous industrial facilities that could fundamentally change our coastal communities. These decisions must not be made behind closed doors, and without rigorous, open discussion of how this will impact our children, our grandchildren, and us. Residents should have the opportunity to learn, hear, and respond to one another in a public venue,” said **Jim Chapman, Chair of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Sierra Club**.

Speakers at the rally will include local medical professionals who will address the health impacts of the increased pollution that LNG will bring to the area; people who depend on tourism and fishing for their livelihoods who will discuss the possible impact of mass industrialization on Island’s economy; and experts on conservation and the wildlife corridor who will outline how the LNG facilities will affect ocelot migration. Residents with concerns about LNG will be invited to read their comments as well.

“South Padre Island is the jewel of Texas’ coast, and people from all over the state flock to its beaches precisely because they are not blighted by heavy industry. With these LNG export facilities releasing smog and carcinogens into the air, and their 15 story-tall storage tanks and 300-500 foot flare stacks blocking the sunset, that jewel will be ruined and our tourism industry will suffer,” predicted **Laguna Vista resident Maria Galasso**.

Residents are concerned that the LNG companies have downplayed many serious issues, including:

- The risk posed to communities by leaks of liquefied natural gas, which can mix with oxygen and ignite to form an intensely hot fire capable of killing and injuring people up to a mile away
- Emissions of air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds upwind of coastal communities
- All of the LNG projects are planned for green field sites that will require the bulldozing of essential habitat for endangered species, such as the ocelot, and the filling in of acres of wetlands that act as aquatic nurseries for commercial marine species
- Loss of local beach tourism and eco-tourism industries that support thousands of jobs
- Loss of municipal and county revenue, as LNG companies request decades-long tax abatements even as they use the roads and other services that those taxes would pay for
- Higher local and national prices for the natural gas that powers electric generation, leading to higher consumer electric rates and higher prices on all consumer goods
- Dramatically increased fracking throughout South Texas to supply these export terminals, with all of the serious environmental, health, and safety impacts that go with fracking
- Gas pipeline networks to feed the LNG terminals that will utilize eminent domain and put landowners at risk

“The people who are making decisions about our future – our elected officials, the Port of Brownsville, the FERC – need to hear from those of us who will have to live with their decisions. They seem to want to stuff their ears and close their eyes and ignore the obvious: – LNG facilities are not free money. They will bring pollution that will poison our kids, industrialization that will undermine our economy, and environmental devastation,” said **Brownsville resident Crystal Martinez**.

The Sierra Club urges all Texans who want to protect South Padre Island to submit written comments on the proposed LNG terminals if they are unable to attend the FERC hearings in person, To do so, they may use [this form](#).

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