

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, March 9, 2018

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Proposed Rio Grande LNG Terminal Could Be Biggest Polluter in Cameron County
Valley residents pack Rio Grande LNG air permit meeting with concerns of high levels of pollutants

BROWNSVILLE, TX -- Residents from across the Rio Grande Valley packed the Brownsville Events Center Thursday night to express concerns for Rio Grande LNG's request for an air permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). If built, this liquefied natural gas (LNG) export terminal would be the single largest source of air pollution in the Rio Grande Valley..

Attendees of the meeting also pointed out that TCEQ's choice of location was a problem, as well as a lack of Spanish translation services. Many residents also carried signs and wore buttons and t-shirts that said "Save RGV from LNG."

"TCEQ and Rio Grande LNG should be ashamed for hosting this public meeting so far away from the Laguna Madre communities that would be most directly impacted," said **Maria Galasso, a resident of Laguna Vista**. "My home could be just five miles away from LNG but I had to drive more than an hour round trip to attend this meeting and give my comments concerning the lack of monitors in the area.

Valley communities like Laguna Vista and Port Isabel have taken a strong stance against LNG by passing anti-LNG city resolutions and intervening on the permits. Two Laguna Vista commissioners attended last night's meeting, one of them brought their child to the microphone, and stated comments of concern. The City Manager for Port Isabel, Jared Hockema, also made a public comment noting the poor meeting location and the offer his city made to the TCEQ for a location free of charge.

Many critics point out TCEQ's embarrassing history of rubber stamping air permits that allow the petrochemical industry to pollute regions of Texas with historically bad air and high asthma rates, like Houston and Dallas. Some Valley residents, however, painted an even broader picture of risk to local communities at the TCEQ meeting.

"Air pollution isn't the only thing that worries me about LNG. These large industrial facilities along the Gulf Coast are dangerous. I remember explosions like the BP refinery explosion. These LNG facilities are not immune to accidents," said **Josette Cruz from Brownsville**.

"Rio Grande LNG is telling the public they will use ground flares instead of tall flare stacks, but

ground flares are just as awful. Ground flares emit both toxic black smoke particles and unburned volatile organic compounds, which both contain known cancer-causing chemicals and no amount is safe for humans. These stay lingering at the ground level and are extremely hazardous to nearby residents,” said **Rebekah Hinojosa, an Organizer with the Sierra Club.**

According to Rio Grande LNG’s own reports, if built, the facility would emit more volatile organic compounds (VOCs) (606 tons per year), carbon monoxide (3,142 tpy), nitrous oxides (2,059 tpy), PM 2.5 (382 tpy), sulfur oxide (30 tpy), greenhouse gases (8.1 million tpy), and hazardous organic pollutants (54 tpy) than any current pollution source in the area.

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