

October 16, 2020

To:

County Judge Eddie Trevino, Jr.
Commissioner Sofia Benavides
Commissioner David A. Garza
Commissioner Gus Ruiz
Commissioner Joey Lopez

Subject: The People Urge You to Reject the Rio Grande LNG Tax Abatement

Dear Judge Trevino and Commissioners,

We, the undersigned organizations from across the Rio Grande Valley, write in opposition to any tax breaks for the fracked gas export terminals at the Port of Brownsville. We are aware that Cameron County is considering a Chapter 312 property tax abatement for the proposed Rio Grande LNG project that would allow the company to avoid paying \$373 million in taxes. Chapter 312 is intended, through tax abatements, to attract industries to locate here. There is no reason to waste tax revenues on an incentive for the Rio Grande LNG export terminal that applied for federal permits to build in the Port of Brownsville years ago. Since all Cameron County property owners, businesses, and industries pay their fair share of county taxes, Rio Grande LNG should be expected to do the same. It is both good business sense and basic fairness.

A tax abatement is an incentive for businesses that people need and want, but there is tremendous local opposition to Rio Grande LNG and the two other fracked gas export terminals proposed for the Port of Brownsville. Anti-LNG resolutions were passed by the Laguna Madre Water District, the South Padre Island Business Association, and the Port Isabel Economic Development Board, as well as the communities of Port Isabel, Laguna Vista, Long Island Village, and South Padre Island. In addition, Rio Grande LNG sought a tax abatement from the Point Isabel School Board which they rejected in 2016. Additionally, thousands of public comments were submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), demanding the regulators deny the permits.

The Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas is adamantly opposed to the proposed fracked gas export terminals because constructions and operations would desecrate land sacred to the Tribe and disinter ancestral human burials in the area that are important to the Tribe. Neither Rio Grande LNG nor any of the projects have completed their due diligence in that they have never consulted with the Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas, who are the original Indigenous people of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The supposed economic benefits of Rio Grande LNG do not outweigh the costs. The LNG project will be a burden on taxpayer-funded infrastructure. Construction of these massive facilities would mean hundreds of trucks damaging our public roads. They will also require services from the local fire department, police department, and emergency management services. Moreover, this proposed fracked gas project will destroy the beauty of the natural environment and all the fish, plants, and animal life that the land and water sustain. The potential environmental destruction of the proposed Rio Grande LNG project will be extraordinarily difficult to mitigate and costly to repair, a cost that would be forced upon the backs of Cameron County taxpayers. If this project evades appropriate tax responsibilities to Cameron County, then the people will lose money, revenue for much needed public services, as well as lose the beauty of the natural environment. Cameron County will be left to deal

with the pollution of this project which would sicken our people, poison the air we breathe, and degenerate the health of our communities.

We urge you to listen to your constituents and Rio Grande Valley residents and reject Rio Grande LNG's request for a massive tax break from Cameron County. LNG is not a done deal. The Rio Grande LNG terminal project is facing lawsuits and delays and has not reached a final investment decision. This tax abatement would force local residents to pay for environmental destruction and pollution that they did not ask for. **Although residents do not want the LNG companies in their communities at all, you will be adding insult to injury if you allow these companies to burden their infrastructure and also rob them of \$373 million in taxes.**

Sincerely,

**Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas
Another Gulf Is Possible
La Union Del Pueblo Entero
GreenLatinos
Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network
RGV No Border Wall Coalition
Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club
The Sunrise Movement Rio Grande Valley
The Environmental Awareness Club
Texas Rising at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley**