

From the Sierra Club

LNG Terminals for Passamaquoddy Bay? Just Say No!

Early this year it was learned that a new group of developers plans to start the application process for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Calais in “early to midsummer.” This will be the third LNG terminal proposed for Passamaquoddy Bay, in addition to a facility proposed for Perry and at the Passamaquoddy reservation at Pleasant Point, and another in Robbinston. The Pleasant Point and Robbinston projects have begun the process with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) but both are “in abeyance” awaiting a waterway suitability report from the Coast Guard which has been stymied by Canada’s refusal to allow ship passage through their territorial waters. All three must also be reviewed by Maine’s Board of Environmental Protection (BEP).

In July 2007 the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club spoke against the Robbinston project at a lengthy BEP hearing that included compelling testimony from Maine resource agencies, biologists, Passamaquoddy Tribal members, and fishermen regarding environmental and socioeconomic impacts. The Robbinston applicant not only has failed to provide significant information on topics such as the effects on lobsters and migratory shorebirds, but also included a pipeline route through Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, for which subsequently the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service quite rightly denied permission. To the amazement of citizen intervenors such as Save Passamaquoddy Bay who had expended considerable resources, effort, and time to file extensive testimony, BEP later allowed the applicant to withdraw its application with the intention of refile in the Spring of 2008, thus starting the whole process over again.

Although these proposals have sharply divided the Downeast and Native American communities that would be affected, apparently few Mainers and visitors from outside Washington County appear even to be aware of the situation.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Educate yourself and your friends and community, as well as elected officials. Check out the website for Save Passamaquoddy Bay 3-Nation Alliance www.savepassamaquoddybay.org and arrange for members of their Speakers Bureau to speak to your local organizations. These dedicated activists will inform and inspire you. Join them at special events such as “Sailabration” and get to know “the Other Maine.”

Write to Governor Baldacci and Maine’s Congressional Delegation urging them to call for a needs assessment now that other LNG terminals will be coming on line for the Northeast region (New Brunswick and Massachusetts), and to support a proactive regional approach to an environmentally sustainable energy and economic future that benefits all Mainers.

— Vivian Newman