

Reprint **Island Tides**

Visit www.islandtides.com for more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics

Reprint from Volume 20 Number 2

February 7, 2008

Opposition to LNG tanker port grows

Fifteen community groups from around the Strait of Georgia have banded together to stop a proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project on Texada Island. The 'Alliance To Stop LNG' is opposing Westpac LNG Corporation's plan to build an LNG tanker facility, a gas-fired generation station, as well as a high voltage power transmission power line on Texada (from the proposed site at Coho Point to BC Hydro's existing 'Cheekye-Dunsmuir' line).

Proposed last year, the project is currently on hold until new provincial climate change directives are announced. However, locals do not believe this is the end of the project and continue to publicize the issue and the new coalition is a result of their continuing action.

'The known risks that come with this proposed project are too great for both the residents of Texada and the surrounding communities,' says Chuck Childress from Texada Action Now (TAN). 'We want to see this project abandoned before irreparable damage is done to our region and our way of life.'

An LNG terminal brings with it many risks, asserts the Alliance To Stop LNG, including increased tanker traffic and the associated increased risk of accident. Increased security around tankers, due to their volatile content would disrupt existing commercial and recreational boating traffic and impact tourism. Texada residents say that their ferry route and other marine activities will be affected as well.

The Stop LNG Alliance says that the proposed gas-fired electricity generating plant would also significantly increase BC's total greenhouse gas emissions, which is counter to the provincial government's new Energy Plan and would make it more difficult for the province to reach its reduction targets.

'At a time when the provincial government is setting legislated targets to dramatically reduce the province's greenhouse gas emissions, this project would simply move us in the wrong direction,' says Georgia Strait Alliance Executive Director Deborah Conner. 'We ask that the province puts a stop to this project and work instead to promote energy alternatives.'

'The harm that the LNG terminal could bring to our region is simply unacceptable,' say long-time Powell River residents Don and Fay Johnson. 'We have lived in one of the most unique and beautiful regions in the world for 15 years, and we simply can't stand by and let this project damage what we love most.'

The Alliance To Stop LNG lists the following impacts of the LNG tanker port project.

LNG tankers are the size of 3 football fields (950ft). The proposal would see tankers pass Victoria, the Gulf Islands, and move up the Georgia Strait past the beach towns and

communities along Vancouver Island's east coast up to Qualicum Beach and Comox, and Texada's west coast. One LNG tanker would go either up or down the Georgia Strait every 5 days. The activity would be extremely disruptive to the heavily-used Georgia Strait and could impact the existing commercial, cruise ship and sport fishing economies in the area.

Because of the highly volatile nature of LNG (tankers are sometimes referred to as 'floating bombs'), security around their movement would be extensive. Northern Texada and the waters off Kiddie (Coho) Point could become high-security zones, including the Gillies Bay Airport. If an explosion were to occur, the damage could be extensive given the energy involved.

In the US, in the era of terrorism, other marine traffic must respect a very large buffer zone around the LNG tankers for safety reasons. These are substantial—2 miles behind, 1 mile in front and 1/2 mile on either side of the tanker. (An award-winning documentary on the risks of LNG tanker transportation, *The Risks and Dangers of LNG*, can be seen at www.lngdanger.com).

Emissions

As part of the project, a massive LNG re-gasification plant, along with two large storage plants, would be built at Coho Point. The plant would bring the LNG to air temperature and refine the gas to pipeline specification. More emissions would be created when the heat content of the gas is lowered to 950-1,000 MMBtu, meeting pipeline specifications, eliminating propane and other gases from the methane.

Plant Bigger Than Duke Point

Westpac also plans a large 600MW gas-fired electricity generating plant, expandable to 1,200 MW.

A proposed 252MW gas-fired plant at Duke Point near Nanaimo would have emitted 800,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. In 2005, the coastal community resisted this project successfully all the way to the BC Court of Appeal. Based on the Duke Point proposal, a 600 MW plant will throw out approximately 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, and 27 tons of fine particle concentration (PM2.5/TSP) (source: Duke Point Hearings).

The proposal would produce 4.35 times the emissions of all four pulp mills active in the Strait of Georgia. Together they produced 459 thousand tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005 (source: Environment Canada).

It is expected that WestPac would use seawater cooling for the gas-fired electricity generation plant so there will be consequential effects on marine life. This tip of Texada is a

renowned fishing spot and the waters around Texada are the cleanest in the Georgia Strait.

Power Line

In addition to the port facility and the power plant, a new high-voltage hydro power line would be built on Texada. The transmission line would be 60m high, 150m wide and 18km long located on a swath of clear-cut from Kiddie (Coho) Point past Van Anda and on to the BC Hydro Reactor site near Bob's Lake on Texada.

The visual impact of the re-gasification plant and storage facility on Coho Point would be quite striking. A 600-1,200 MW generation plant would be about 100 ft in height. The size of the LNG tankers would dwarf the Blubber Bay loading facilities. The power line down Texada would be 150 meters wide. It is likely that a further pipeline would be needed to move the gas south.

Economic Concerns On Texada

At 300.45 sq km, Texada is the largest island in the Strait of Georgia. It had a population of 1,129 in the 2001 census. Texada's economy has been based on its limestone quarries (it produces 5 million tons of limestone annually) and forestry but increasingly it has attracted new residents from Vancouver and other parts of BC and Canada who value the island's environment. These new residents create a large number of jobs for local people, including carpenters, electricians, plumbers, realtors, and developers, and they support the local stores. The WestPac proposal will discourage this retirement industry, placing jobs at risk, says Texada Action Now.

The WestPac proposal would also result in a loss of tourist and recreational interests, and negative consequences to artisans, restaurants, and tourist-based incomes for the island.

According to Texada Action Now, any potential jobs and benefits of the proposal would be few and their worth would be outweighed by degradation to the environment and quality of life on Texada. Negative impact would be felt in the areas of safety and security, decreased property values, possible expropriation of private land, pollution, disruption of ferry services, and loss of employment due to a slowing of construction.

In addition to their concerns around the LNG terminal and power plant, the groups under the banner of the Alliance to

Reprint from ISLAND TIDES, Feb 7, Page 2

Stop LNG also want an end to all new coastal oil and gas infrastructure in British Columbia. They also support the existing moratorium on tanker traffic in BC's North Coast and no new tanker traffic in the south.

A petition was organized on Texada Island. 84% of Islanders opposed the project. Petition director Leslie Goresky stated, 'The 84% is not 84% of those that were approached to sign, it is 84% of the overall adult population. If someone wasn't home we had to put them with the 16%. That means our support is probably much higher.'

Californians Say No To LNG

In April 2007 following major public demonstration, and a hearing, the California Coastal Commission turned down a floating LNG terminal 28 miles off-shore from Malibu, as did Malibu City Council. There are six LNG terminals in the US, on its east coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

Alliance Members

The Alliance to Stop LNG's member groups and contacts are: BC Citizens for Public Power, Melissa Davis, 604-681-5939; Dogwood Initiative, Eric Swanson, 250-370-9930 ext. 27; Georgia Strait Alliance, Deborah Conner, 250-753-3459; Green Party of BC, Don Johnson, 604-485-4297; GSX Concerned Citizens Coalition, Arthur Caldicott; Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society, Eagle Walz, 604-483-9565; Sierra Club's BC Chapter-Malaspina Group, Glenn Parkinson, 604-485-7478; Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, Daniel Bouman, 604-886-8325; Texada Action Now, Chuck Childress, 604-414-3537; West Coast Environmental Law, Greg Gowe, 604-684-7378; Wilderness Committee, Andrea Reimer, 604-719-3920. ✉

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with this attribution, in its entirety, with notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

'This article was published (February 7, 2008) in 'Gulf Islands, Island Tides'. 'Island Tides' is an independent, regional newspaper distributing 15,000-20,000 copies in the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria, BC.'

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.
Email: islandtides@islandtides.com. Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>
