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Southeast PA Communities Unite to Stop the Philadelphia LNG Export Task Force Scheme

***Groups call for healthy communities, not dirty liquefied natural gas (LNG) Projects
Chester Rally and Press Conference at Tuesday August 22 Hearing***

Chester PA – Chester residents were joined by people from throughout southeastern PA to protest a plan by the **Philadelphia LNG Export Task Force** (<https://bit.ly/3QGNZAL>) to promote a liquefied natural gas (LNG) processing plant and export terminal in the Delaware River Ports.

People rallied outside of the hearing room on the Widener University campus at Lathem Hall in Chester and then proceeded to join the 10:00 am Task Force hearing to support community representatives who were testifying on their behalf. Zulene Mayfield, chairperson of [Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living \(CRCQL\)](#) and Stefan Roots, Chester City Council member and Democratic mayoral candidate for the City of Chester, spoke for those that would be impacted by an LNG facility. A statement by Fermin Morales, from the Philadelphia community group [Philly Boricuas](#) and a union electrician for IBEW Local 98, was read into the record by Zulene Mayfield because he wasn't available to attend.

Speakers who planned to testify but were denied a speaking spot by Task Force Chair Martina White include Earl Wilson, President of the Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition in Philadelphia and Shawmar Pitts, Co-Managing Director of Philly Thrive, Grays Ferry, Philadelphia. Members of the public were also not allowed to testify as the pre-arranged roster was set behind closed doors by the Task Force.

A press conference was held after the Hearing by organizations from Southeastern PA with Pennsylvania State Representative Joseph Hohenstein (www.pahouse.com/Hohenstein) who is an appointed member of the Task Force, Pennsylvania State Representative Carol Kazeem (<https://www.pahouse.com/Kazeem/>) who represents Chester and parts of Delaware County, and people who testified or were supposed to testify – including Zulene Mayfield, Stefan Roots, Earl Wilson and Shawmar Pitts.

“There can be no decisions about us, without us. We call on all legislators from Delaware County to protect the people of Delco and oppose Penn America LNG!” **said Zulene Mayfield, Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL).**

"My duty as a legislator is to hear all constituent concerns across the 159th district, both by those who may voice concern towards the LNG project as well as those who may support the notion. My goal is to ensure that these task force meetings are as transparent as possible, with hopes that this transparency will keep the local community appropriately informed. I already testified at a prior task force meeting a few months ago in Philadelphia and voiced my concerns regarding what an LNG Export terminal would look like in my district. It is clear that abundant questions still remain as to what the project would look like and how it would impact the City of Chester," **stated Pennsylvania State Representative Carol Kazeem, 159th Legislative District.**

Pennsylvania State Representative Joseph Hohenstein, 177th District, Philadelphia County, stated, “This Task Force is authorized by the legislature and paid for by the taxpayers of Pennsylvania. As we conduct the people's business we have a duty to make certain that all voices are heard and all the facts developed. I do not believe we have done our duty because we are not truly lifting up all voices and the process is more opaque than transparent so the facts remain shrouded.”

“An LNG facility does not belong here – we don’t want it, we don’t need it and we will oppose every effort to build an LNG Export Terminal anywhere in the Delaware River Watershed,” **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

"We cannot allow an LNG export terminal to be constructed in the City of Chester or anywhere in the Philadelphia region. Chester is already overburdened with toxic pollution, and we are already suffering from climate chaos driven by fossil fuels. It's time to stop permitting new fossil fuel infrastructure and to commit to a just transition to renewable energy that brings clean air and good union jobs to our communities," **stated Rabbi Julie Greenberg, Director of Climate Jobs & Justice at POWER Interfaith.**

“Chester has been the dumping ground for every polluting industry, especially trash incineration, and it's unjust. We know we have to move past fossil fuels, because we're destroying our planet. Dumping on Chester even more with the proposed LNG terminal, when we know we have no business expanding fossil fuels, is doubly unjust”, **stated Shawmar Pitts, Co-Managing Director at Philly Thrive.**

Linnea Bond, Health Educator for Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania said, “In my work interviewing Pennsylvanians living near gas infrastructure, I have documented how across the state and country, the fossil fuel industry harms residents’ health while steamrolling local voices. When I attended an

LNG task force hearing as a Philadelphia resident last April, however, I saw firsthand the representatives on this task force aggressively preventing my Chester neighbors from participating, and then arbitrating what is “good for them” behind locked doors. With the health of an already highly impacted community at stake, the task force’s classism and racism are as dangerous as our expanding fossil fuel industry.”

“My community has been at the disposal of polluting industries for far too long, and we’ve had enough. Our Children, elders, families, and working people are not disposable, and yet we are being poisoned by polluters trying to make a quick buck from a dying industry. We’re here today to say that the cost is too high, and we will not pay it. We demand that no LNG facility, and no new fossil fuel infrastructure be permitted in Delaware County, or anywhere!” **said Echo Alford, Steering Committee member of Marcus Hook Area Neighbors for Public Health.**

“There is no place for an LNG facility anywhere in the Delaware River port region. We are united here today with the communities of Chester, the [Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living \(CRCQL\)](#) and other southeastern Pennsylvania groups who are saying ‘NO WAY’” to this reckless proposal to put a highly polluting and explosive industry where people live and work. The intolerable air pollution and the safety dangers posed by liquefied natural gas make our entire region off limits. The LNG Task Force has the wrong idea at the wrong place and the wrong time; we need clean and safe jobs that leave dirty energy in the past,” **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

The lack of transparency of the Task Force and the shutting out of the very communities that would be exposed to the pollution and danger of an LNG processing plant and export terminal has stoked suspicion and derision by the public. The Chester location was chosen by the Task Force for the Hearing because it is a likely location of the terminal and is the only place in the Delaware River Ports where a company has publicly stated plans to build one (see: <https://bit.ly/45Ewkh2>).

At the prior April Hearing the public was turned away from even entering the hearing, ostensibly due to capacity limits of the room, and the speakers who were prepared to testify were rejected last minute. At the second Hearing in May, PA State Representative Carol Kazeem testified eloquently for her District which includes her home town of Chester and parts of Delaware County. No community public have been allowed to speak.

Written comments can be submitted by the public to the Task Force at: Mrosenberger@pahousegop.com. The deadline for comments has not been publicly stated by the Task Force.

The PA Legislature passed a bill last year, and Governor Wolf signed it into law (<https://bit.ly/3QGNZAL>), setting up a “Philadelphia LNG Task Force” targeting southeast PA in the Delaware River Watershed as a **liquefied natural gas (LNG) export hub**, regardless of the public safety and health harms of explosive and polluting LNG, the inevitable environmental damage, the already intolerably overburdened communities where this facility would go and where fracking would occur, and the exacerbation of the climate crisis with more methane emissions.

One well-hidden meeting was held by the Task Force in January to elect Representative Martina White, secretary of the PA Republican Caucus, as chair. The members of the Task Force were set by the statute. It is unknown who is representing some of the members on the Task Force such as Mayor Jim Kenney, who does not seem to have attended any of the Hearings. Virtually all speakers were handpicked by the Task Force for their bias in support of LNG Exports so far. The Task Force will be writing up a recommendations report by the end of this year.

Organizations that have joined the network to stop any and all LNG Export Terminal in the Delaware River region include: Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL), Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Philly Boricuas, Food and Water Watch Pennsylvania, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania, Marcus Hook Area Neighbors for Public Health, Philly Thrive, Eastwick Friends and Neighbors Coalition, Clean Air Council, POWER Interfaith, Watchdogs of Southeast PA (Wasepa).

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