Gibbstown Logistics Center Plans to Export Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

Delaware River Partners (DRP), subsidiary of New Fortress Energy, has applied for permits to build a second dock with two additional ship berths at the Gibbstown Logistics Center. Originally billed as a warehouse-type terminal with one dock and one berth, the Center was going to handle automobiles, dry and refrigerated cargo. Bulk liquids such as natural gas liquids (NGL) like propane and butane would be stored on site, utilizing the old cavern built by DuPont for the manufacture of explosives decades ago. NGL was to be exported by ship down the Delaware River to overseas ports. Since 2016, Delaware Riverkeeper Network and other organizations (NJ Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, and Environment New Jersey) opposed the project for environmental reasons and in opposition to the export of fracked natural gas liquids. The Gibbstown Logistics Center Dock 1 project was nonetheless approved.

The new proposal by DRP for the additional dock and berths is supposed to reflect New Fortress Energy’s revised market plans – to concentrate on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and NGL. The addition of LNG and the expansion of the hazardous bulk liquids shipping is a completely new ball game that requires a substantial body of specific environmental, health and safety analyses, increased regulatory scrutiny, and much greater public review and input. Additional approvals are required for LNG terminals and shipping. Here are some of the important facts about “Dock 2”, the proposed LNG export terminal.

The Gibbstown Logistics Center Dock 2 LNG/LHG Export Terminal Proposal:

- Would provide navigational access, mooring, and loading equipment for two ships up to 173,400 cubic meters in capacity and would be located west (downriver) of the single multi-purpose dock that is nearly completed near Thompson’s Point. The volume of LNG to be exported in current plans is unclear due to DRP’s shifting numbers and missing data. But recent applications for permits reveal more than 5 million gallons of LNG is the average daily export volume.
- Would triple the potential activity at the facility, greatly increasing ship traffic. Each year 100 ship vessels would call on Dock 1 (NGL + other cargo); 37 LNG ships at Dock 2; total: 137 ship vessels.
- Would require dredging of an additional 45 acres of river, impacting water quality; fish, aquatic life, and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species; river vegetation; and other river uses.
- According to a DRP permit application, over 1,650 trucks trips each day would come and go from the Gibbstown Logistics Center. The total “daily trips” of all traffic is estimated at 8,450 to/from the site. The proposed Rt. 44 Bypass has not been started construction, to be built in 1 to 1 ½ years at best, meaning truck traffic carrying dangerous LNG/NGL will move through residential Gibbstown.
- Train traffic to Gibbstown Logistics Center would carry NGL and eventually LNG. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) recently approved a “Special Permit” for rail cars to carry LNG (designed 50 years ago and not proven safe for LNG), from Bradford County, PA (distance: over 200 miles) across Pennsylvania, New Jersey and into Gibbstown; unit trains of up to 100 cars are allowed. Nationally, there is a ban on using rail cars for transporting LNG because it is so dangerous but PHMSA rulemaking is being considered to allow it nationwide as well. Documents do not disclose how much NGL will be moved by rail, which is allowed under current regulations, but the volume will increase since the facility is increasing overseas shipments of NGLs as well.
- Would “transload” LNG round the clock directly from trucks or rail cars onto shipping vessels, each ship taking 10-15 days to fill, a much extended loading period that greatly increases the opportunity for accidents and spills. Other LNG facilities typically load ships in one day to minimize risk. At least 75 neighbors are within 200 feet of the site, including a day care and the Gibbstown Public School.
- NGL, classified by PHMSA as “liquefied hazardous gas” (LHG) would be unloaded from a 20-railcar rack to be stored in tanks and in the underground cavern. It would be loaded by a pipeline from storage to the ship at one of the berths for sale overseas. (i.e. Caribbean, Angola, Ireland)
- Air pollution from activities at the site, including truck traffic, diesel equipment, venting of LNG and NGL, has not been publicly discussed, nor have the impacts of flaring off gas and/or the construction and operation of a proposed “small capacity” natural gas liquefier on site.

### Other facts:

Gibbstown Logistics Center is located on the Delaware River at approximately River Mile 86 at 200 North Repauno Avenue, Gibbstown, Greenwich Township, Gloucester County, NJ, occupying approximately 371 acres included in Block 8, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4.02 in Greenwich Township, according to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Waterfront Development Permit WFD190001) but is described in other documents as 218 acres. The site is part of a 1630-acre tract previously owned by E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company (“DuPont”) since 1880, used by DuPont and others for industrial purposes, including the manufacture of chemicals and explosives, until about 20 years ago. It is still contaminated by PCBs and several toxics, including nitrobenzene, a highly toxic carcinogenic chemical.

Chemours Co. LLC (“Chemours”), a spin-off of DuPont, owns the property since 2015. DRP (New Fortress Energy) acquired the site for Gibbstown Logistics Center on June 30, 2016. Chemours is responsible for the cleanup of the entire site, including the Gibbstown Logistics Center site, using methods such as groundwater pumping. The site is under the NJ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

LNG is a liquefied cryogenic flammable gas, cooled to at least -260 degrees F. It is dangerous to handle and store, bringing with it “unique safety hazards”. If LNG liquid is released it creates a serious safety hazard for those around. Exposure to LNG can cause extreme freeze burns. Spills that catch fire burn extremely hot and bring with them serious risk of burn – second degree burns within 30 seconds for those exposed within a mile. LNG can cause a catastrophic Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion. The explosive force of LNG is similar to a thermobaric explosion – a catastrophically powerful bomb.

PHMSA and expert reports say an LNG release boils furiously into a flammable vapor cloud 620 times larger than the storage container -- if ignited, the fire is inextinguishable. An unignited ground-hugging vapor cloud can move far distances downwind into communities, burning if then ignited. If “confined” in a ditch, by some wall or into a sewer system, it can spontaneously explode over a 1-mile area. The 2016 US Emergency Response Guidebook advises fire chiefs initially to evacuate 1 mile. No federal field research has shown how far the vapor cloud can move so in the most recent serious Plymouth WA LNG fire, they evacuated a 2-mile radius. The unpredictable movement and inextinguishable fire makes evacuation the preferred defense. There is a lack of response training or equipping of communities exposed to LNG.

To get involved in opposing the Gibbstown NJ LNG export terminal contact: tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org

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