



Philadelphia Stop LNG by Rail Network

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23 Philadelphia Region Elected Officials Submit Letter to Biden Administration Opposing LNG by Rail

Philadelphia, PA – Twenty three elected officials from the Greater Philadelphia Region, including Pennsylvania State Senators, Pennsylvania House Representatives, Philadelphia City Council members, and local municipal officials, submitted a letter to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and to President Biden requesting the federal government disallow the transport of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) by rail through this region. Read the submitted letter here: <https://bit.ly/3yqiKBG>.

The officials urged PHMSA to deny the application filed by Energy Transport Solutions (ETS) to renew Special Permit DOT-SP 20534 (the “Special Permit”)¹ that would allow rail tank cars to be used for the transport of LNG, a hazardous, flammable, and potentially explosive cargo. The letter states that the railcars were designed 50 years ago for different cargo, have not been proven safe for transporting LNG and the Special Permit through our region is the first and only instance in the nation where this would be permitted. Up to two 100-car LNG trains could travel from Wyalusing, PA to Gibbstown, NJ every day for export of LNG overseas.

The letter states:

“LNG trains would cut through the City of Philadelphia and the region, exposing our most burdened communities, people of color and low income, to the greatest risk along

¹ <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/safe-transportation-energy-products/liquefied-natural-gas-transportation-rail>

the rail route these trains would travel every day. The transport also threatens the Delaware River and our entire city with catastrophic danger.”

“According to the Department of Transportation and PHMSA themselves, the transportation of LNG by rail endangers communities and accelerates the climate crisis. PHMSA specifically identified “potential direct and indirect GHG emissions associated with authorizing LNG by rail tank car and the adequacy of emergency planning and response resources” as areas in need of further study in a proposed federal rulemaking.² PHMSA is proposing to suspend the Trump-era regulation allowing bulk transportation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by rail anywhere in the nation based on concerns for community and environmental risks.³”

Elected officials from the Philadelphia region explain why they signed the letter:

“It is nothing less than an environmental injustice to permit the transport of liquefied natural gas through Philadelphia without giving the community the opportunity to comment. Black and brown Philadelphians already bear the brunt of the climate crisis’s consequences. We should be uplifting working-class communities of color, not forcing them to live with yet another environmental hazard. Allowing liquefied natural gas to be transported through our neighborhoods via rail, which the Department of Transportation and PHMSA acknowledge is dangerous, is a slap in the face. I urge you to prohibit Energy Transport Solutions from transporting natural gas through Philadelphia”, **said Philadelphia Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.**

“We should not be transporting liquefied fracked gas through our city by *any* means. To do so by rail, would be profoundly dangerous, reckless and irresponsible in the largest, most densely populated city in our commonwealth,” **said Representative Chris Rabb, representing Legislative District 200, Philadelphia County.**

“At some point, preventing grave threats to public safety, especially ones that have the potential to cause such catastrophic damage and death in densely populated areas, has to trump corporate profit,” **said Sen. Judy Schwank, Senate District 11.**

“Transporting by rail this highly explosive substance through Philadelphia neighborhoods places our homes, hospitals, schools, families, and communities directly in the path of danger. PHMSA should reject the Energy Transport Solutions special permit and prioritize human safety over corporate greed,” **said Representative Rick Krajewski, Legislative District 188, Philadelphia County.**

² Hazardous Materials: Suspension of HMR Amendments Authorizing Transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas by Rail, Pipeline & Haz. Mat. Safety Admin., 86 Fed. Reg. 61,731 (Nov. 8, 2021).

³ *Ibid.*

“It’s frightening that the Federal government would consider allowing dangerous, potentially explosive LNG to move through neighborhoods in the Philadelphia region. Right now, we should be investing in clean energy, not doubling-down on methods that will pollute our water and exacerbate climate change,” **said Representative Elizabeth Fiedler, Legislative District 184, Philadelphia County.**

READ the submitted letter here: <https://bit.ly/3ygiKBG>.

Background:

A Special Permit DOT-SP 20534⁴ was issued by PHMSA to New Fortress Energy subsidiary Energy Transport Solutions (ETS) in 2019 for the transport of LNG in rail cars for the proposed Gibbstown LNG Export Terminal on the Delaware River. The LNG would be shipped out overseas in enormous tank ships, larger than any other being used this far north on the Delaware River.

The Gibbstown project has not been constructed, all major permits are under appeal by Delaware Riverkeeper Network and some permits are still needed. The Special Permit for the LNG trains was never used by ETS and expired November 30, 2021. ETS has applied for a renewal, which is pending before PHMSA today.

Public interest in Philadelphia and the surrounding region in the Special Permit is broad, diverse, and robust, as demonstrated by opposition to the Special Permit in the [letters](#), petitions, municipal and organizational resolutions, a community video⁵ and other expressions of regional, local, frontline and community opposition⁶ submitted to PHMSA and the Biden Administration over the past three years. Comments submitted to PHMSA during the public comment process for the Special Permit in 2019 presented substantial concerns regarding public safety and technical deficiencies from many quarters.⁷ This is an immensely controversial project.

The Philadelphia Stop LNG by Rail Network is comprised of organizations working in the Greater Philadelphia Region including **Philly Boricuas, Make the Road Philadelphia and Allentown, 350Philly, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Philadelphia Neighborhood Networks, Berks Gas Truth, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, PennEnvironment, Clean Air Council, and Sierra Club Southeast PA Chapter.**

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⁴ <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/safe-transportation-energy-products/liquefied-natural-gas-transportation-rail>

⁵ <https://youtu.be/NFyBhbzc6Fg>

⁶ <https://bit.ly/3r7VAto>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/3f75RR6>