

City of Providence
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 117

EFFECTIVE March 28, 2016

WHEREAS, National Grid is proposing to build a natural gas liquefaction facility adjacent to its existing storage facility at Fields Point in Providence; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the National Grid storage facility receives liquefied natural gas (LNG) delivered via tanker trucks; and

WHEREAS, The existing storage facility is known as a peak-shaver facility, which stores LNG for use on peak energy days, when energy demand exceeds supply, such as during very cold weather days; and

WHEREAS, National Grid's proposal would construct an additional facility that would receive natural gas via existing pipeline, and produce LNG on site, with some to be stored on site, and some to be delivered to other locations via tanker truck; and

WHEREAS, The liquefaction process transforms natural gas to LNG by cooling it to -260 degrees, turning it into liquid, and thereby decreasing its volume 600 times; and

WHEREAS, National Grid asserts that "demand for LNG has increased around the world, creating market volatility for LNG pricing" and that since most of its "New England LNG supply is shipped to the region from foreign sources and transported by tanker trucks... unforeseen events can also place the reliability of LNG deliveries at risk, making it essential... to secure a reliable, reasonably priced LNG supply"; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported that nearly 95% of Rhode Island's net electricity generation (electricity generated for consumer use) comes from natural gas, and that approximately half of the households in the state heat with natural gas; and

WHEREAS, The EIA also reported that Rhode Island had one of the lowest per capita energy consumption rates in the nation, and was the second lowest emitter of carbon dioxide of all states; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is positioned to become a leader in renewable energy, with the 30 megawatt Block Island Wind Farm--the first offshore wind farm in the United States--under construction and scheduled to be operational by the end of 2016; and

WHEREAS, Other innovative programs, such as Solarize Rhode, are incentivizing small-scale renewable energy systems in our cities and towns; and

WHEREAS, The environmental impacts of the liquefaction process, combined with the natural gas extraction process (fracking), are widely cited; and

WHEREAS, Studies have noted that the release of methane into the environment from oil and gas production is significantly greater than previously estimated the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and

WHEREAS, In March 2016, President Obama announced new rules to reduce methane emissions--which according to the EPA, have a 25 times greater impact on climate change than carbon dioxide emissions--from existing gas and oil facilities; and

WHEREAS, Supporting the proposed Fields Point liquefaction facility could undermine efforts to reduce Rhode Island's reliance on natural gas and other fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, The impact of the proposed National Grid LNG facility on public safety, public health, environmental justice, and climate change must be thoroughly considered and publicly discussed; and

WHEREAS, The proposed project site has an impact area that includes neighborhoods with populations vulnerable to environmental threats, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, and asthma; and

WHEREAS, The Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health, Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott stated in a letter to FERC regarding the project that the department of health "has ample data on poor health outcomes, elevated health risks, and racial and ethnic disparities within the City of Providence and in particular within the neighborhoods of Upper and Lower South Providence and Washington Park, which are in close proximity to the proposed project" and noted that these and other factors should be included in assessments of the cumulative impacts of this proposal; and

WHEREAS, While LNG-related disasters are uncommon, a recent incident at an LNG facility in Washington State required the evacuation of a two-mile zone, which if applied to the proposed site at Fields Point, would mean the evacuation of tens of thousands of people; and

WHEREAS, Other uses near the proposed LNG liquefaction facility may increase the potential for casualties and public health and safety risks that could result from an accident.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby support and urge the City's involvement in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement that comprehensively addresses the environmental impacts of the current and proposed LNG facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the environmental impact analysis include potential disaster scenarios, evacuation plans, and casualties within a two-mile radius of the project site, as well as evaluates the concentration of other facilities in the area that may impact public health and safety in the case of a disaster; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the environmental review include studies of diesel truck traffic between I-95 and the port area on a daily, monthly, and annual basis, and the estimated particulate matter released into the air as a result of such traffic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council supports the Rhode Island Department of Health request that a Risk Management Plan be required; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City of Providence will hold public forums in multiple neighborhood locations and shall require representatives of the project site owner to attend to answer questions and address concerns, as well as require that representatives from Rhode Island Department of Health, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Corporation participate in the public forums; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City of Providence will ensure compliance with the highest standards of environmental and health protocols, and will address, to the extent allowed by law, environmental, safety, and health concerns associated with this project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage, copies of this resolution be delivered to the Director of the Department of Planning and Development, the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Corporation, and the Secretary of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAR 17 2016

READ AND PASSED

PRES.

CLERK

Effective without the
Mayor's Signature



Lori L. Hagen
City Clerk