

AES Suspends LNG Application Permit

- by Diane Carliner -

A spokesperson at AES corporate headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia informed the *East County Times* on Friday, March 27 that they have suspended "for now" their application to build a liquefied natural gas terminal in Sparrows Point. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) had given AES conditional permission in February, provided environmental constraints will be met, to build a terminal on contaminated land for liquefying natural gas. The gas would be shipped in tankers 12 stories high and the length of a football field from foreign countries and piped 88 miles northeast to Eagle, Pennsylvania for distribution.

But other federal agencies recently tightened the noose around the neck of the AES project. Someone from the United States Army Corps of Engineers told Russell Donnelly of the community LNG Opposition Team on March 25 that the Corps has denied AES permits for dredging to build a facility and for other water-related activities. If AES still wishes to build the facility, they will have to start from scratch again and re-file for dredging permits in compliance with the Clean Water Act and other related environmental permits.

The United States Coast Guard wrote to the FERC on

March 18, "The Chesapeake Bay is not currently suitable for the type and frequency of LNG marine traffic associated with the proposed LNG facility." They noted the Bay could be made suitable in the future for this type of operation if measures are taken to manage maritime security and safety risks. The letter warns the FERC that if AES ships attempt to enter the Bay, a Captain of the Port order could have a ship or the terminal inspected, delay or detain a ship, restrict the facility or ship operations or expel the ship from United States waters.

Another thorn in the side for AES is getting enough Clean Air points. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, AES needs 734 of them. So far they obtained 67 from a local company by trading. The FERC can approve siting or construction of a facility but has no legal recourse to do so without approval by the Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers. Donnelly stated the Army Corps is a branch of the Department of Defense.

Donnelly commends the LNG Opposition Team, pro bono attorney Bart Fisher, our elected officials and the press for their perseverance in keeping protests against the LNG project alive since 2006.