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From: Joseph Mercurio [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2013 10:19 PM
To: LNGStudy
Subject: economic study comment

Dear Secretary Chu and DOE decision makers:

I have a masters degree in public policy, retired from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. I am writing as a life-long resident of Pennsylvania, a heartsick grandmother and deeply concerned world citizen.

I strongly oppose the exporting of natural gas from the U.S.

The economic analysis done by NERA Consulting is simplistic and 'old school' - written about a world that no longer exists. But since NERA was following the parameters set by DOE, the onus falls upon you. Recommending full blown extraction and use of U.S. natural gas as if the world was not hurtling toward the civilization-threatening effects of climate change is delusional. Climate change isn't just a crisis for the U.S. but for the countries which would buy the gas. I know that you understand how dire the situation is. I heard DOE Undersecretary for Science, Dr. Koonin speak at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). When frustrated CMU academics asked him repeatedly why the U.S. couldn't craft a sensible, progressive energy policy reflective of the technologies and conditions of today's world, his answer - over and over - was,
"The problem is not with the science." or "Science is the easy part."

I understand the directives of the Trade Agreements, yet I believe that you could - and should - legally deny the permit applications. The pipelines that bring the gas to the terminals were built in 'the public interest' for the distribution of IMPORTED natural gas to U.S. end users. Using those pipelines to transport from domestic gas fields to terminals for EXPORT is therefore illegal, since it profits private industry rather than the public interest. Typifying a projected increased GDP as a public good is, once again, 'old school' - or worse. Continuing to emphasize consumption rather than conservation and sustainable energy in a world of finite resources and impending disaster is unethical - when one knows better.

Ordering a strictly macroeconomic study is like looking at the forest while ignoring the trees. The losers aren't only the wage earners and people who depend on government payments and the consumers who will pay higher prices for energy and everything else that they buy - all of whom were mentioned in the study as part of a benignly described, 'income transfer'. This redistribution of wealth from the poor and middle class to the gas industry, the major stockholders and the mineral rights owners exacerbates an on-going socioeconomic trend that historically describes a country headed for upheaval.

Also missing from the analysis are the external costs associated with the high volume slick water hydraulic fracturing (HVSWHF) process which has made shale gas accessible. Contrary to industry claims, HVSWHF is a relatively new, complex, evolving, inherently risky, dirty process. Other industrial processes take place in areas set aside and zoned 'Industrial', HVSWHF is happening near homes, schools, hospitals - in farms, parks, forests and ecologically sensitive areas. The quick expansion of this industry has not allowed time for studies, data collection, consulting; nor for wise, comprehensive regulatory frameworks to be developed. Communities where shale gas is being extracted feel like the 'wild west'. People complain about health effects, water contamination, property devaluation, community infighting, truck traffic, air pollution, corruption of the political process, disruption and diminishing of their quality of life. Approving the exporting of LNG will 'open the flood gates', putting every community and natural area unfortunate enough to find itself siting atop gas rich shale at risk. You would be condoning corporate colonialism.

Thank you,

Phyllis Mercurio
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