

10/18/05

# Groups oppose putting LNG station on parkland

## Say harbor islands deserve protection

By Raphael Lewis  
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A coalition of two dozen conservation and maritime industry groups yesterday condemned a Virginia energy company's proposal to build a liquefied natural gas terminal on one of the outermost Boston Harbor islands, saying the project would defile a park system.

"I don't like the precedent of creating a national recreation area, then in the first decade carving a piece of it out to sell to an energy company," Bruce Berman, spokesman for Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, said after the coalition wrapped up a State House press conference.

Referring to the national debate over drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, he added, "I would say it's ANWR on the East Coast. Parks are supposed to be forever."

AES Corp., the firm behind the proposal announced early last month, has lobbied newspaper editors and state lawmakers to



Robert E. Travaglini did not endorse the proposal.

— into an industrial zone.

The proposed bill, which has yet to be written, would also establish a competitive bidding process for rights to build the 35-acre LNG facility, as well as a long-term lease. Company officials have floated the idea of paying at least \$10 million annually on the lease, and roughly \$5 million in taxes.

It would take a two-thirds vote of both houses of the Legislature to allow the land conversion, and AES has hired a stable of Beacon Hill power brokers to sell the proposal, including John A. Brennan Jr., a former state Senate assistant majority leader; Rob Gray, former press secretary to Governor William F. Weld; and lawyer James Aloisi, former general counsel of the Turnpike Authority and a friend of Senate President Robert E. Travaglini.

Travaglini, an East Boston Democrat, told reporters yesterday that he would consider any proposal that would reduce LNG tanker traffic into Everett, where residents live in fear of a terrorist attack or catastrophic accident. He did not specifically endorse the AES proposal.

Aaron Samson, managing director of LNG projects for AES Corp., said he could offer no assurances that the company's terminal project would reduce shipping traffic into the Everett terminal. However, he said, the project would vastly increase the supply of liquefied natural gas to the Boston area with minimal effect on harbor shipping or recreational activities.

"We are certain that the island itself has amazing technical attributes that make it the right place for an LNG terminal," Samson said, including its distance away from population centers and the approach to Logan International Airport.

Outer Brewster Island, owned by the state, is one of 34 islands that make up the national recreation area established in 1996. It lies in a cluster of islands that offer some of the area's best birding, fishing, and diving, but Outer Brewster itself has no recreational facilities such as picnic tables or trails. It hosts an abandoned quarry and the remnants of a World War II-era gun batteries and barracks.

Phil Warburg, president of the Conservation Law Foundation, said the groups that condemned the AES project yesterday were not necessarily opposed to the creation of increased LNG capacity in the region. The opposition, he said, was to using parkland to do it.

"Our parks should not be up for sale to the highest bidder," Warburg said. "More natural gas is needed in New England. But we need to ensure that supply in a matter that doesn't fly in the face of state and federal resource protections."

Kimberly Haberlin, spokes-

woman for House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi, said the North End Democrat wants to examine a host of proposed sites for on- and off-shore LNG facilities before deciding whether to endorse any of them.

"He does support legislation to establish a commission to review the potential locations for these facilities," Haberlin said.