

Letter to the Editor - Lamenting the Cove Point project

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To my fellow residents of Calvert County:

"I feel sorry for people who live on Cove Point Road" is a comment I recently overheard in a local eating establishment. Local people were talking about local happenings, including the increased presence of Dominion in Calvert County as evidenced by all the trucks as well as the "eyebrow arching" size of the equipment (see attached photo) being hauled on local roads, as in "...have you seen how huge those pieces of equipment are?"

Some people are just beginning to notice the disruption being caused by Dominion's large-scale construction of a heavy industrial facility in the middle of our bayside community. This is not a minor modification of an existing structure rather Dominion is excavating and building a power-generating plant with a gas refinery and liquefaction plant. This locates an industrial plant in the middle of Lusby, the most highly populated town in Calvert County, with unknown levels of risk to its citizens. The risks are unknown because local and state governmental bodies have not yet required that appropriate safety studies be conducted. Without a comprehensive study (a "QRA" – Quantitative Risk Assessment) to assess the actual scope of this project and all possible risk scenarios, we cannot develop adequate emergency response and evacuation plans. This type and size of industrial plant has never been built near such a populated area, anywhere in the world. We must take extra precautions because people are vulnerable.

This industrial facility will store up to 410,000 gallons of highly explosive propane, up to 14.6 billion cubic ft. of Liquid Natural Gas (predominantly methane gas), and alarming levels of toxic, carcinogenic and explosive chemicals. Preliminary reports indicate that 33 tons of fuel will be needed to burn every hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in order to clean, cool, liquefy and pressurize the fracked gas that will be exported to Japan and India.

Logic dictates that accidents and human error cannot be fully avoided and this combination of volatile and flammable products has the potential of causing catastrophic events. Additionally, the emissions generated (an estimated 21.5 tons of toxic and carcinogenic Hazardous Air Pollutants, annually) are linked to increased incidence of respiratory and cardiovascular disease. I know of at least one person with respiratory ailments that claims to feel the effect of the dust and dirt being kicked-up by the trucks and the busses on Cove Point Road and is already wearing a protective mask in the car while driving between Cove Point and Solomons. Personally, I no longer use Cove Point Road, and will go out of my way to avoid it, in order to enter and exit Chesapeake Ranch Estates (CRE).

In short, a lot of people stand to be effected by the continued construction of this industrial plant and not just the people on Cove Point Road. If any of this raises concerns for you, your family, or loved ones in the area, more information is available at Calvert Citizens for a Healthy Community (CCHC) at www.calvertcitizens.org and at We Are Cove Point at www.wearecovepoint.org.

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CRE resident and small business owner

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