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PLAN TO TRANSPORT DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES DOWN THE DELAWARE RIVER NOW OPEN TO RECONSIDERATION

A plan has been approved to allow Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) and other hydrocarbons to be shipped from a port in Gibbstown, NJ down the Delaware River for export to foreign countries. On June 12, 2019, Governor Carney joined with other states' Governors on the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to allow this project to move forward.

The possibility of accidents as these materials are brought to Gibbstown cannot be ignored, nor can the possibility of extensive damage from fires following spills during transfers there. Attacks on tankers carrying these explosively flammable materials could result in catastrophic damage in Wilmington and other sites along the Lower Delaware. Finally, this project would encourage the extraction and utilization of gas from the Marcellus-Utica Shale, a result that works directly against efforts to slow global warming.

The DRBC has agreed to redo this vote, and it now appears very likely that this vote will take place on September 10.

There is a risk of serious accidents in this plan. The route of loaded ships down the Delaware River results in dangers to both vital infrastructure and densely populated areas.

LNG carriers and tankers carrying higher hydrocarbons will pass (or pass under) important infrastructure, including two vitally important

bridges, an oil refinery, a nuclear power facility and areas of dense population from Claymont to New Castle. In the Delaware Estuary and Bay, they will pass through areas vital to Delaware's tourist economy. Concerns about fires from LNG spills, including those from an attack near the Delaware Memorial Bridge, led to the specific prohibition of LNG terminals in Delaware's Coastal Zone.

Spills from tankers carrying higher hydrocarbons such as ethane, propane or butane can result in fires that are hotter than those from LNG. There is the possibility that large spills of these materials in the highly developed areas near Wilmington could result in catastrophic structural damage and loss of human life through a process in which a fire in a cloud of hydrocarbon gases can lead to detonations comparable to those from bombs.

The risk of attack increases as the number of shipments increases. The cost of insurance to cover such an event is another consideration.

Safety concerns should dictate Coast Guard regulations, in which bridges would be shut down when a loaded tanker passes beneath them, causing major traffic jams. Shipping traffic in the Main Channel should not be permitted to come north when filled tankers are travelling south. Movement of smaller boats on the river could be affected. Delawareans have not been informed of any benefits of this plan that would outweigh safety issues, interrupted traffic on land and in our shipping channels, and the threat of increased global warming. People whose lives or jobs could be affected by the DRBC's decision deserve to be considered and consulted.

Governor Carney is a member of the DRBC, and the League of Women Voters of Delaware has contacted him, urging that he vote against the project.