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## Conn. residents weigh in on LNG terminal

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NEW LONDON, Conn.

Strong opposition by Gov. M. Jodi Rell to a proposed natural gas terminal on Long Island Sound kicked off a hearing Tuesday night as the public had its first chance to comment on a draft report by federal energy regulators.

State Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Gina McCarthy delivered Rell's statement, criticizing the proposed security zone around the floating barge as the taking of property by a private company with federal approval.

"It's like your neighbor forcing you to grant an easement so he can continuously drive his car through your nicest garden to and from his garage," McCarthy said.

Nearly 200 people attended the hearing at Mitchell College. Their focus was the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's draft report that found the project will have minimal impact on the environment and public safety if certain guidelines for construction are followed.

Many opponents worried that Connecticut has been stripped of its jurisdiction and that Long Island Sound would be industrialized.

Broadwater Energy, a consortium of Shell Oil and TransCanada Pipelines Ltd., wants to build the floating liquefied natural gas barge in New York waters about 10 miles south of New Haven and nine miles off Wading River, Long Island.

A portion of a security zone would be in Connecticut waters, and the vessel would be visible from the Connecticut shoreline, about 10 miles away.

Rell compared the terminal -- projected to be 1,200 long and 82-feet high -- to building a factory "in the middle of a national park."

The terminal would supply 1 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day, enough to heat 4 million homes a year and would be completed by mid-2010. Under the Broadwater proposal, the terminal would receive LNG shipments by boat, then pump the gas into the existing pipeline between Long Island and Connecticut.

About half of the gas would go to New York City, between 25 and 30 percent is targeted for Long Island and the rest would go in Connecticut.

Broadwater officials said in a meeting before the public hearing that the floating terminal would supply a much-needed source of energy to New York and Connecticut, and challenged opponents to come up with a better plan.

A report issued by the U.S. Coast Guard in September said the terminal poses safety and security risks that would require more firefighters, escort boats and other measures to prevent accidents or terrorist attacks.

Leah Schmalz, a spokeswoman for Save the Sound, a program of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, said FERC was basing its conclusion on a project whose design is not final and called the draft report an "inadequate document."

Her group contends the terminal would have a cumulative effect on water quality and make the large resource off limits to residents.

Supporters touted the economic development benefits of the project. Carl Gustin, president of New England Energy Alliance, a coalition of energy companies, businesses and labor unions, said there has been a 70 percent increase in natural gas consumption in New England the last 10 years.

"We believe there is a compelling need for Broadwater and other facilities," Gustin said.

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who jumped into Long Island Sound on Sunday with a group of Broadwater opponents for a benefit, said in a statement Tuesday that the project should be doomed because a plan to modernize the Coast Guard is behind schedule.

"This new information shows that the Coast Guard's plan to expand and upgrade its fleet is a colossal failure and provides new evidence that the Coast Guard cannot address accidents or attacks on the proposed Broadwater energy facility or tankers supplying it," he said.

Other officials including Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., oppose the project.

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani fielded questions before the hearing to address public safety concerns. His company, Giuliani Partners, was hired by Broadwater to provide safety and security assessment. Broadwater organized a meeting with Giuliani and local officials before the public hearing.

Giuliani said the facility will "have the best security possible." Employees would have thorough background checks and the company is committed to using the latest security technology available.

Broadwater, based in Riverhead, N.Y., ran radio ads Monday promising Connecticut and New York natural gas customers savings of \$300 a year if the terminal is built.

Even if the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approves the project, Broadwater will still need permits from New York.