



## NEW JERSEY SENATE

CHRISTOPHER BATEMAN  
SENATOR, LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 16

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July 27th, 2019

William Schoonover,  
Associate Administrator for hazardous Materials Safety  
Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation, East building PHH-30  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

RE: PHMSA Docket No:2019-0100

Dear Mr. Schoonover,

As representatives of New Jersey's 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> legislative districts, we wish to comment on Docket PHMSA-2019-0100. We are writing to request a 90-day extension of the deadline for comments to your agency on the draft Environmental Assessment for proposed Special Permit SP 20534. This Special Permit would allow Energy Transport Solutions, LLC to transport "Methane, Refrigerated Liquid" (UN1972), commonly known as liquefied natural gas (LNG), by DOT-113C120W rail tank cars in unit train or manifest train service.

We are concerned that inadequate attention has been paid to the potential dangers posed by LNG transport for severe fire and safety risks to New Jersey communities from LNG train derailments, fires, explosions, and other hazards. As the most densely populated state in the nation, New Jersey has developed areas around its rail lines that are at a potentially high risk of deadly consequences in the event of an accident from burn-back trapped gas explosions (confinement fires), high population exposure to boiling vapor clouds, and intense far-reaching fire.

We note that in Cleveland, Ohio in 1944, one hundred people were killed after LNG from a storage tank leaked into the city's sewer system and ignited. This kind of trapped gas confinement fire, were it to happen in New Jersey, would be devastating, finding many avenues along New Jersey's crowded rail lines if a tank ruptured from a train derailment.

Recent oil train derailments that have taken place in North America—such as Lac Megantic, Quebec; Mosier, Oregon, and over a dozen other communities— demonstrate the necessity to take a hard look at LNG transport.

Specifically, our concerns regarding the Energy Transport application include but are not limited to:

- no stated limit on train length,
- no stated maximum allowable car weight,
- allowing a maximum speed of 50 mph with no empirical data to support that speed,
- no BLEVE (boiling liquid evaporating vapor explosion) modeling, and
- no analysis of “limited zone of hazard” beyond labeling it “significant.”

Additionally, we are concerned about a complete lack of permit restriction to avoid routing through densely populated suburban and urban centers.

To date, no rail tank car standards for LNG have been established and no intermodal LNG packaging testing results have been completed for LNG rail shipment. President Trump mandated in his April 10<sup>th</sup> Executive Order 13868 that the Department of Transportation establish new LNG regulations for rail transport. Granting a special permit for LNG transport and moving forward with a special permit process in advance of any new regulations is a dangerous and foolhardy process that puts New Jersey at risk.

New Jersey cannot be ground zero for testing the safety parameters of an unregulated highly explosive fuel.

We the undersigned believe that the July 8<sup>th</sup> close of the PHMSA comment period for the Environmental Assessment is not enough time to give this special permit project the review it demands. Given the potential for grave impacts on human health potentially associated with LNG transport by rail, and the lack of data and analysis provided in the Environmental Assessment, we respectfully request an extension of the comment period to 90 days so that we and other interested parties in New Jersey can gather the information necessary for informed comments.

Protecting the people and the environment of New Jersey is of paramount importance and requires that any potential rail transport of LNG receives the most stringent review.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bateman  
Senator, 16<sup>th</sup> District

Shirley K. Turner  
Senator, 15<sup>th</sup> District