

Peninsula Progressive

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FREE!

Sears Island LNG Terminal Proposed

by Stephen Miller

[On May 4th, under pressure from the Town of Searsport and concerned local groups, Gov. Baldacci wrote that MDOT would not sign an agreement with a liquefied natural gas (LNG) developer "without the support of the Town of Searsport." This article offers background on the most recent threat to Sears Island, the largest undeveloped island in Maine.]

A master plan has been in the works for Sears Island that would allow the largely forested 941-acre island to be used for an LNG terminal, other industry, office space, and housing. "Up to 700 acres" may be developed on Sears Island, stated Maine & Company, a Maine site selection services company.

On November 18, 2003, Maine Public Radio reported that an unidentified company was secretly negotiating with state officials to build a half-billion dollar LNG terminal on Sears Island. The State of Maine purchased Sears Island in 1997 after withdrawing an application for a cargo port.

In December, an international shipping industry report said that ExxonMobil had submitted a proposal to the US government for construction of an LNG terminal on Sears Island.

In February, Loring Bioenergy announced that it wanted to build a natural gas-fired electrical generating plant on Sears Island or in Searsport to produce electricity and surplus steam energy for sale to out-of-state manufacturing operations.

Days after the Town of Harpswell defeated a proposal for an LNG terminal there, Governor Baldacci, on March 12, said he would "defer heavily to local governments" about LNG citing. But at the same time, because Sears Island "is somewhat unique in that it is a state-owned parcel of land," Baldacci asked Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Jack Cashman and MDOT Commissioner David Cole "to evaluate proposals from any developer that



seeks to purchase or lease portions of the island for LNG or other purposes."

The extent of this effort to industrialize Penobscot Bay is unprecedented.

(con't p. 2)



Photojournalist Jim Harney photographed an Argentine Madre (Mother of the "Disappeared"). PPJ sponsored his April 1 presentation at the Liberty School.

Jim Harney Shares Faces of Argentina

by Bonnie Preston

Factories in Argentina are closing and jobs are being lost, while the Argentine business community has over \$400 billion invested elsewhere. Seventy percent of Argentine children are poor and hungry while the country is a major exporter of beef and grain. The emerging consensus in Latin America is that they must focus on the domestic economy, which puts Latin America on a collision course with the United States, anxious to exploit the region's resources for the benefit of multi-national corporations and investors. Argentina is one of the leaders of the opposition (the Group of 21) to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and helped derail negotiations in Cancun and Miami.

Argentina is the second-largest country and second-largest economy in Latin America. The United States sees Argentina as a place where big money can be made. The reality of globalized free trade, unfortunately, is that industrial capital is being destroyed in favor of financial capital, and local economies are being devastated in favor of global economies.

Under the Argentine dictatorship, instituted in part by the United States, Argentina's debt grew from \$5 billion to \$45 billion. The debt burden became totally unsustainable, with debt repayments outstripping new loans. In 2002 and 2003, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank loaned Argentina \$9.3 billion and took back \$16.6 billion in debt repayment. Who benefitted? One was Kenneth Dart, who made a fortune from styrofoam cups and now earns \$170,000 every 37 days from his share of the interest earned from Argentine debt.

Though the situation in Argentina is dire, Harney brought a message of hope by focusing on its people, who are poor but resourceful, and determined to reclaim their future. For example, groups of workers are attempting to take over and re-open factories. Their stories inspired those in attendance.

FMI: visit www.posibilidad.org

Posibilidad, 85 Wiley St., Bangor, ME 04401

Sears Island con't

Other proposals to develop Sears Island, such as the cargo port of the 80's and 90's, and even the nuclear power plant of the 70's, did not represent such far-reaching and potentially devastating development.

These earlier development schemes were rejected primarily due to two factors: (1) the incredible ecological value of Sears Island and the region and (2) the devastating effect these land uses would have on the region's natural resource-dependent economies such as fishing, tourism, boating, and development.

Growing concern for the future of Sears Island and Penobscot Bay falls into three groups: health, safety and security; effects on existing economic activities; and damage to natural resources and local cultural identity. LNG can readily ignite before or after it becomes vapor when it warms to air temperature, as in the case of a spill. Liquid gas can burn in the location of the spill or, if vaporized, move away from the location of the spill until ignited into a fire ball. The extent of such a fire depends on how much gas escapes and how quickly it becomes diluted. Studies indicate that a fire involving 1 percent of the contents of an LNG tank would be devastating.

Because of national security risks, tankers carrying LNG typically have a Coast Guard enforced "exclusion zone" surrounding them as they enter, unload, and exit. This exclusion zone is expected to be two miles in front of the vessel, one mile behind the vessel, and 500 yards on either side. Standard tankers used today are 900 feet long, 140 feet wide, 36 feet in draft below the water and 82 feet high. All other vessels--recreational, commercial, fishing--must vacate the exclusion zone.

LNG tankers carry between 2.6 and 2.8 billion cubic feet of natural gas. In full build-out phase, an LNG terminal on Sears Island would require between 130 and 140 ship deliveries a year. Since the exclusion zone applies upon entry and exit, as many as 280 days each year could have a tanker move up or down the west bay, interrupting all other marine traffic like ferry service and fishing as it slowly moves past.

Tankers enter and exit during daylight hours for security reasons. Also because of security, this traffic schedule is announced only 24 hours in advance.

Tanker traffic, and the resulting interruption of other marine activity, would have a chilling effect on the current economies of the region. Lobster fishermen, frustrated by interruptions in access to traps, may have to move them elsewhere or find other work. Recreational boating might decline due to intermittent loss of access to the water.

LNG facilities include storage tanks, a regasification plant, distribution system and related development. They must operate on a 24/7 basis, sending noise and light into the area around the clock. Real estate values decrease in proportion to their proximity to this type of development. In fact, according to a study conducted by Yellow Wood Associates,

all properties located within two miles of the tanker route and terminal would expect an average loss of between 10 to 20 percent, with some properties located adjacent to the terminal becoming not sellable.

Sears Island is the largest undeveloped island on the Maine coast and supports 168 species of birds, nine species of amphibians and reptiles, 28 out of the 39 mammal species found in New England, 73 distinct wetlands, over 600 acres of forest, more than 100 acres of old fields and fern meadows, seven acres of salt marsh and 17.5 acres of beach.

In the marine waters around Sears Island can be found nurseries, mollusks and bivalves, worms, algae and kelp, sea urchins, and eelgrass. These gifts of nature give Pen Bay residents identity; make Pen Bay residents stand out from good people elsewhere.

FMI: Friends of Sears Island, peacework@midmaine.com,
www.penbay.org/searsisland.html

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or write: Governor Baldacci, Office of the Governor,
#1 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0001;
207-287-3531; governor@maine.gov

Energy Miser Club Launched

by James Lippke

The Coalition for Sensible Energy, an all-volunteer not-for-profit Blue Hill Peninsula organization, has created a new website, www.csemaine.org, which introduces the CSE Energy Miser Club. The Energy Miser Club offers free membership to individuals who take the EMC pledge (to save and conserve energy in everyday activities) and to all who submit an energy-saving idea that gets printed on its "Energy Saving Ideas" page.

Seventeen Energy Saving Ideas are currently on the website. Ideas include winter comfort tips, an energy-saving bread-making recipe, biodiesel, and a description of how to buy "green power," power generated by non-polluting sources. Visit the website to vote for your favorite as the Honoree of the Month. Energy saving ideas can be submitted electronically or mailed to CSE, Box 366, Bucksport, ME, 04416.

CSE was formed in the early 90's to "work for wise energy choices that will sustain future generations economically & environmentally." Its website discusses nine issues related to Sensible Energy Policy ranging from Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency to Global Warming, Climate Change, and Transportation.

FMI: www.csemaine.org

Program Director, Pamela Person, 469-6770
Secretary, James Lippke, 326-8081

Sovereignty and June 30, 2004

by Tony Ferrara

During the April 13th press conference, President Bush frequently used the term “sovereignty” to describe what was going to take place in Iraq on this date, but it’s not going to be the transfer of sovereignty, unless up is down, war is peace, and to pacify is to kill. My dictionary defines “sovereignty” as freedom from external control, autonomy, unrestricted authority, dominion, absolute power.

Occupation nullifies sovereignty, and our military is occupying Iraq. The continued use of the term sovereignty for the 6/30/04 event only publicizes to the world that Bush and his team are in gross denial regarding Iraq: the causes and purposes of the war, the insurgency, and, most importantly, Iraq being the linchpin of its strategic plan to democratize the Middle East. The continued promulgation of this distortion can only deepen Iraqi humiliation and embarrass Americans who see their leaders exposed as hypocrites on the world stage.



Photos by Peter Robbins, taken at the *March for Truth: Maine Still Says No to War*, march and rally in Augusta, March 20, 2004

Quotable: “Iraqis are sick of foreign people coming in their country and trying to destabilize their country.”

--George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., May 5, 2004

Calendar

May 13 Peninsula Peace and Justice meeting with guest speakers Brenda Wentworth & Ryan Conrad, who will present their experiences at Miami FTAA protests. Liberty School, Blue Hill, 6:30 p.m. FMI: 326-4405 **Day change!**

May 27 *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land*. Film. Blue Hill Library, 7 p.m. FMI: 326-4405

June 9 Peninsula Peace and Justice meeting. Liberty School, Blue Hill, 6:30 p.m. FMI: 326-4405

June 24 *Breaking the Silence*. Film. Blue Hill Library, 7 p.m. FMI: 326-4405

On-going vigils

Blue Hill bridge, 12-1 p.m., Sundays. **new time/place!**
Deer Isle Congregational Church, 4-5 p.m., Mondays.

Peninsula Peace and Justice provides a community forum for local and global issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. The group strives to create a space where growing awareness may be realized as inspired action.

Join the Peninsula Peace and Justice (PPJ) mailing list:

Peninsula Peace and Justice
P.O. Box 1515
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Receive the PPJ News and Alert e-list:

robbins@downeast.net

Send newsletter suggestions to

Carolyn Coe: coecarolyn@hotmail.com

Donations welcome.



Peninsula Peace and Justice Spring/Summer Film Series

all films shown at 7 p.m., Blue Hill Library
followed by discussion

May 27 *Peace, Propaganda, & the Promised Land*

This documentary examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its coverage by the U.S. media. The film features a wide array of viewpoints, from American intellectuals like Noam Chomsky to Arab activists and Israeli dissidents. The film was made by the Media Education Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Northampton, Mass.



June 24 *Breaking the Silence*

This report into the "war on terror" by award-winning journalist John Pilger exposes the lies and falsifications used to justify the Bush administration's global "war against terror" and its illegal attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Pilger uses archival footage and interviews with former intelligence analysts, historians, human rights activists and some White House officials to explain how the Bush administration seized on the September 11, 2001 attacks as an opportunity to activate long-held plans to seize control of valuable oil resources in the Middle East and elsewhere.

July 22 To be announced