

# LNG

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opposition in your deliberations on this important issue," Long stated.

He said that he and his colleagues understand that state Attorney General Patrick Lynch "has requested the opportunity to allow independent navigation safety and security experts to review and comment on the plan."

Long concluded, "While we have great confidence in the Coast Guard to make this decision independently, we hope you will consider the input of other stakeholders and experts before issuing your final ruling on this critical matter."

### State opposition

State Representative Bruce Long, (R-Jamestown, Middletown), during his report on state issues, also joined in the renewed opposition to LNG efforts that affect the area. He observed that developers repeatedly propose projects and revisions. "They have to win only once. We have to win every one," the legislator said.

A court appeal, in First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston with the Nature Conservatory as a lead challenger, is still pending on the 2005-06 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approvals of the Fall River project.

Weaver's Cove officers said at an industry forum several days ago that they are optimistic about gaining all needed permits and winning the court case but acknowledged that opposition has added about \$100 million in costs to the originally budgeted \$400 million development plans.

### Coast Guard role

The Coast Guard is reviewing a long-awaited filing in March by Weaver's Cove about its latest plans to bring LNG tankers into Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays and the Taunton River. Nash said a Coast Guard letter of recom-

mendation either for or against the project is due later in the spring.

A year ago, the Coast Guard ordered a revised plan about LNG shipping after Weaver's Cove said it would use smaller tankers after Massachusetts said it would not demolish the old Brightman Street Bridge. The larger tankers would need the bridge removed so they can have enough room to maneuver, according to opponents. Smaller ships would mean more trips, causing even more disruption on the waterways and for shoreline communities, opponents have explained.

Weaver's Cove LNG is also awaiting an Army Corps of Engineering decision about plans to dredge nearly three million cubic yards of sediment from Mount Hope Bay and the Taunton River.

### Federal report

Among other recent LNG related activities, the Federal Government Accountability Office issued its congressional report finding that fire from an LNG tanker could produce heat, not flames or explosions, that would burn people one mile away. The study urged the US Energy Office to perform new research on the risks from a major fire or gas release in terror attacks or natural disasters on such tanker ships.

The US Congressional Homeland Security Committee last month asked the Coast Guard to review its position about having enough resources to deal with LNG activities, including applications for 10 new mainland facilities and five offshore depots. Rear Admiral Brian M. Salerno, Coast Guard director of inspection and compliance, responded that his office was reviewing concerns.

Officials at FERC, with authority over LNG operations, said no facilities would be approved without emergency response plans and other security features.

### Save the Bay

Save The Bay is among several organizations opposing the LNG project because of dredging as well as security zones for the tankers while in area waterways. It recently launched its own website for opposition, [www.stopweaver-scove.com](http://www.stopweaver-scove.com).

Save the Bay concerns about dredging include that it will stir up sediment known to be contaminated with mercury; fill Rhode Island Sound with dredged materials not appropriate for the naturally coarser substrate at the disposal site; and deplete oxygen in the water channel, causing irreversible harm to aquatic life.

## Barn site

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lis, a former council member and prominent North End opponent to Lot 47 and the abutting former town landfill.

The town identified Lot 48 a few weeks ago for consideration for the barn. She reviewed considerations among the three parcels; at the bridge, and the two lots that on April 9 were aired by town leaders as current location options.

She said any of the three parcels would need a special use permit. She said the bridge location involves no environmental issues, would cost \$515,728 for site preparation, and needs no zoning change.

Willis said Lots 47 and 48 involve environmental issues, need zoning changes and a Summit Avenue abandonment. She noted that the lots no longer abut vacant forest lands, but residential lots already developed or due to be built upon soon. She said the previous town solicitor said a zone change "would be no problem, but then again, other (solicitor) advice did not work out so well either."

She said she would detail en-

vironmental concerns at another time. She focused on costs and zoning. She added an estimated lost equity of \$300,000 if Lot 47 was to be sold, increasing the town's estimated site work cost of \$417,746 to more than \$700,000. She noted the town's estimate of Lot 48 costs at \$692,746.

### Lots 47 and 48 linked

Willis said Lots 47 and 48 are "unalterably linked, tied at the hip so to speak." She said Lot 48 needs to be linked with Lot 47 to complete barn needs. She said "to change zoning can be contentious, costly and lengthy." She detailed the nearness of wetlands and open space, some with conservation designations, in the area of Lots 47 and 48.

She concluded that a decision left to voters must include clear information from the council. "Putting two sites on the ballot which may not be usable in the end is leading the voters down a blind alley once again," she stated. She suggested the council's choosing the bridge area land could result in a barn before the end of the year. Officials have talked in recent weeks about budgeting the barn construction for 2008.

### Bridge request

The council's resolution on Monday asked bridge officials to answer by May 14.

It said the town has been considering several sites for the barn for nearly 10 years. Other officials have said the need was first introduced in the 1980s. The resolution said Keiser evaluated possible locations including town land along the north side of the Newport (Pell) Bridge where a relatively small piece of abutting bridge land would be required. Bridge Authority Chairman David Darlington told councilors April 9 that the authority would not make a decision until the town specifies that

it needs the bridge land. He also said the authority did not want to be party to barn site controversies. The resolution says it wants to know the authority's answer "with sufficient time to perform procedural actions necessary to place a referendum question before the electors," later this year.

### Previously

Keiser earlier this month presented the three options - near the bridge and two other lots as "workable and very viable."

The bridge option, in the Taylor Point area, is somewhat southwest of the town wastewater treatment plant. It is not the same location as the \$2.4 million plan rejected by voters in November 2005. The rejected plan was designed to have all or most materials at the site. The new option involves some barn-related storage at the landfill.

Keiser projected the new 12,500 square foot garage could be delivered for under \$2 million. He said the building itself would cost between \$800,000 and \$1 million.

Costs for storage and road paving within the former landfill, now used for the trash transfer station, were included in costs estimated at \$627,564 for mandated closure of the landfill, according to Keiser's presentation. He listed the lower entrance area of the former town landfill out of the running for the barn because of site preparation costs of \$1.2 million.

### Related issue

Meanwhile, a response of Town Solicitor Peter Ruggiero to citizen complaints about secret talks by officials about barn location options was not presented. He originally said it would be ready this month, but more recently said he needed additional time because more complaints were lodged, and a year's worth of executive sessions had to be reviewed. The

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