

Center for Effective Government * Clean Water Action * Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Earthjustice * Earthworks * Environment America * Food & Water Watch * Sierra Club
Western Resource Advocates

April 8, 2014

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our members and supporters, we write today in opposition to H.R. 6, the *Domestic Prosperity and Global Freedom Act*. This bill seeks to expedite liquefied natural gas (LNG) export applications by sidestepping Department of Energy (DOE) review, and seeks to automatically approve all applications currently before DOE without fully analyzing their impact on the public interest. We urge you to oppose this bill that will put the public interest and our environment at risk.

Currently, proposed LNG export terminals are reviewed by two federal agencies. DOE determines whether exporting natural gas from a given terminal is in the public interest. For exports to countries with which the U.S. has entered into a free trade agreement (FTA), DOE automatically deems the export to be in the public interest and grants the application. For export to non-FTA countries, DOE reviews whether the specific proposal is consistent with the public interest, considering economic impacts, international impacts, security of natural gas supply, and environmental impacts, among other factors. While DOE considers whether to authorize the export of natural gas, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) considers applications to construct and operate the export terminal.

H.R. 6 seeks to undermine DOE's role in approving applications to export natural gas. It would extend the priority and preference that exports to the 20 FTA countries have in the DOE process to all 159 countries that are members of the World Trade Organization. Instead of allowing DOE to continue to base decisions to export LNG on the wide range of potential impacts to people, our economy, and the environment, H.R. 6 would cut the agency out of the approval process entirely for exports to most of the world.

Expanded LNG exports would lead to increased fracking. Fracking is already occurring on public lands, near schools and playgrounds, and even in people's backyards. Drilling pollutes our air and our water, and is connected to a number of health problems people living in gas fields experience. If DOE approval is granted automatically, DOE's ability to consider this full range of impacts will certainly be lost.

A few key facts:

- Drinking water contaminated: In 2012 alone, fracking operations produced 280 billion gallons of toxic waste across the country. Laced with cancer-causing and even radioactive material, this waste has contaminated drinking water sources from Pennsylvania to New Mexico.
- Forests and parks at risk: From Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, to Mesa Verde in Colorado, to the George Washington National Forest in Virginia, and the Delaware River Basin, our national forests and places near our national parks and drinking water sources are at risk of irreparable damage and contamination from expanded fracking.
- Scope of the problem: At least 141 million acres have already been leased for oil and gas production—equal to the size of California and Florida combined.

Meanwhile, fracking still remains exempt from key provisions of our nation's bedrock environmental laws— including the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and our nation's hazardous waste law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) -- leaving communities and our environment without the protections they deserve.

In addition, by approving all applications currently in the queue, this bill could have a detrimental effect on both American consumers and American industries that rely on natural gas. Studies on the impact of LNG exports conclude that as more gas is exported, prices will go up. As of April 7, 2014, DOE has granted either conditional or final approval for seven applications to export LNG to non-FTA countries. None of these seven has come online yet. Even the one project that has already commenced construction does not expect to export LNG until 2016. DOE is processing these applications every 60 days. This bill is not needed to speed the ongoing process. In order to truly preserve the public's interest in decisions about when, how and where to export natural gas, DOE must participate. For all of these reasons, we urge you to oppose H.R. 6.

Sincerely,

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