

FRANKLY, COLONNA GOT IT WRONG

Newsflash. Malibu does not support building a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal in Long Beach....and never has. So why would former Long Beach City Councilman, Frank Colonna, write a lengthy op-ed and place it in three newspapers accusing Malibu of being NIMBYs and hypocrites and of using “dishonest behavior” to “volunteer Long Beach as an alternative site for any possible LNG terminal” in CA?

Colonna’s accusation would be devastating, *if* it were true. Unfortunately for Colonna, his published claim is an outright fabrication and a lie.

Oddly, Colonna’s piece does dovetail nicely with recent PR efforts that seek to discredit the voices of Malibu residents who oppose the construction of a massive floating LNG storage and regassification terminal off the coast of Malibu **AND OXNARD**.

That’s right, Oxnard. After reading Colonna’s piece, no one would ever suspect that Oxnard was first to oppose BHP Billiton’s proposal to build a never-been-done-before floating LNG terminal off the Ventura/LA County coast. While Oxnard may not be home to hundreds of high profile celebrities, it does have a core of hard-working, determined residents who vigorously oppose BHP’s project. After reviewing two draft Environmental Impact Reports that acknowledged significant negative impacts to air quality, public safety, and the marine environment that could NOT be mitigated, they justifiably concluded that they did not want this facility built. And, the Oxnard City Council and the Oxnard Elementary School District unanimously agreed with them.

Colonna’s rationale for ignoring Oxnard’s concerns while singling out Malibu for attack doesn’t pass the smell test. But, it’s not the first time Oxnard has been ignored. Despite the fact that the proposed LNG terminal is far closer to Malibu, BHP from the beginning has described it as an “Oxnard” project no doubt hoping against hope that their approvals would come before anyone was the wiser.

Oxnard’s fears grew considerably back in 2005 when Governor Schwarzenegger publicly stated that the ‘Oxnard’ LNG project was his ‘personal preference.’ To keep the Schwarzenegger Administration on board, BHP Billiton hired Manatt, Phelps & Phillips to carry their message; a senior Manatt partner was the co-chair of Schwarzenegger’s 2006 re-election effort. In the last 18 months alone, BHP has spent over \$2.4 million dollars lobbying at the State level, a figure that Oxnard could not hope to match.

It was not until Malibu residents and the Malibu City Council joined Oxnard’s efforts in this high stakes fight that people started to take concerns about BHP’s

LNG project seriously. Several highly successful public protests attended by both communities caught the media's attention and news of opposition to BHP's Cabrillo Port spread around the world, splashing onto the front pages of newspapers from Australia to India.

Colonna's piece implies that offshore LNG terminals pose no significant impacts to public health, safety, marine life, military security, etc. Wrong again. Ironically, while Colonna rattles off the precise dimensions of the proposed pipelines to be installed on the ocean floor, he somehow forgets to mention the earthquake faults they would have to cross. Nor does he reveal the amount of smog producing pollutants (200 tons per year) that will be disgorged into the already compromised air basins of Ventura and Los Angeles for the next 50 years. Missing, too, is a description of the company's efforts to circumvent the requirements of the Clean Air Act by refusing to obtain emission reduction credits – a ruse that the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District has disavowed.

Surprised by Colonna's sudden public advocacy for an LNG terminal in another community, I called to ask if he had actually reviewed the Cabrillo Port DEIR and the reports of independent experts that detailed the project's problems. His lack of familiarity with those problems indicated to me that he hadn't. He also appeared unaware of BHP Billiton's involvement in an oil-for-wheat scandal in Iraq, its continuing efforts to gain control of a key Iraqi oil field, and its checkered international environmental record. When directly asked to provide proof that Malibu residents had 'volunteered' Long Beach as the preferred site for an LNG terminal, Colonna provided none because, frankly, it does not exist.

There **are** powerful interests who want to build an LNG terminal in the Port of Long Beach. These include the companies who will profit from it, the hired guns paid to lobby for it, and unions who want the temporary on-shore jobs to build it.

Support for building an LNG project in Long Beach where the danger to the population and the Port poses an unacceptable risk does not now and has never included the residents of Malibu or Oxnard. Colonna owes both an apology.

Susan Jordan is the director of the California Coastal Protection Network and the co-founder of the Statewide LNG Environmental Stakeholder Working Group.