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### BHP gas port would pollute air, study says

By Charles Levin, [clevin@VenturaCountyStar.com](mailto:clevin@VenturaCountyStar.com)  
March 31, 2007

A proposed liquefied natural gas terminal off the Ventura County coast would increase air pollution beyond acceptable standards and exacerbate greenhouse gases, according to a staff report released Friday by the California Coastal Commission.

Staff members are recommending the 12-member panel reject BHP Billiton's Cabrillo Port terminal as not complying with state coastal policies.

"The project would result in numerous substantial impacts to coastal resources," the staff wrote.

The commission will consider the 186-page report and recommendation at a public hearing at 9 a.m. April 15 at the Fess Parker Doubletree Inn, 633 E. Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara.

Under state rules, BHP was required to

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submit a report showing how the 971-foot floating terminal would comply with California's coastal policies. The terminal is slated for 13.8 miles off the Oxnard coast.

Staff members found that Australia-based BHP adequately provided solutions to some impacts such as marine resources, water quality and commercial fishing.

BHP has argued that equipping several tugboats to serve the facility with natural gas engines would reduce air pollution to well below acceptable thresholds.

The commission report, however, found that BHP failed to meet local air quality standards regarding nitrogen oxide, a key component of smog.

Also, the project would increase greenhouse gases by several million tons a year. Experts believe greenhouse gases cause global warming.

Increased greenhouse gases would lead to rising sea levels and a loss of habitat and species, the report says.

Linda Krop, chief counsel of the Environmental Defense Center in Santa Barbara, said she was pleased with the report.

BHP Spokeswoman Kathi Hann declined comment, saying the company had not yet reviewed it.

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