



Malibu's Only Daily News

Sunday Oct 1, 2006 | 2:45pm

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LOCAL

LNG Is Fast Defining The Gubernatorial Battfield
Angelides: The Case Has Not Been Made To Support LNG

by KRISS PERRAS RUNNING WATERS
PCH Press
September 30, 2006 8:33 AM PT

MALIBU - In a crowd full of Republicans and Democrats united on the galvanizing issue of LNG, California State Treasurer and Democratic nominee for Governor Phil Angelides yesterday announced his opposition to the planned BHP Billiton Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Cabrillo Port planned off the coast of Oxnard and Malibu.

LNG is fast becoming the hot topic of the Gubernatorial campaign with many voters feeling LNG is not even a needed energy source in this state. Polls and high attendance at Anti-LNG rallies suggest voters seem to smell energy company corruption on the lips of those supporting LNG.

Synapse Energy Economics recently completed an independent study that showed California could reduce its demand for gas through more extensive energy efficiency programs and sticking to the Governor's proposed acceleration of the Renewable Portfolio Standard.

Recently, the Governor's staff has gone on record with PCH Press stating Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is basing his decision that California has a need for LNG on an Energy Commission Study that supports a need for LNG. However, to date the Governor's Office has not been able to come up with the name of the specific study.

"The justification for an LNG facility has not been made. The case has not been made," Angelides said Friday in an interview at a press conference at Bluffs Park. "And we need to be smart. We need to be investing in solar. Renewable energy. Geothermal. Clean energy sources. We need to move away from drilling along the coast, putting LNG facilities along the coast. We need to be smart about our future."

Angelides has taken a diametrically opposed stand from the Governor's support of LNG in California.

"We should not even be considering Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities along this coast until there are full environmental studies. Until there are full safety studies done." Angelides said. "So, as Governor I won't even consider a location until there are full environmental safety studies done."

Angelides said he is "dubious " about any facilities along the coast.

"The California coastline is very special. It's one of a kind. It's an asset we have an obligation to pass down pristine to our children and

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grandchildren," Angelides said. "So I would veto this proposal. And I won't even consider any proposals until those full studies are done."

Evidence to support there is corruption behind the need for LNG issue is on the table for debate and that California's Natural Gas shortage is a forced Enron-style situation.

It has been widely reported that in September 2004, the CPUC approved Sempra Energy's request to terminate contracts with domestic natural gas suppliers which opened a hole in the state's natural gas supply.

Sempra, an energy company that owns Southern California Gas and San Diego Gas and Electric, is constructing on LNG project in Baja, California, Mexico known as the Energía Costa Azul LNG receipt terminal. The \$600 million project site is located 14-miles north of Ensenada. This facility will be owned solely by one company – Sempra. Commercial operations begin in early 2008 and will process 1 billion cubic feet of gas per day.

In order for Sempra to sell natural gas to California, the energy giant had to go to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). And in a three to two vote, the CPUC actually agreed to cancel contracts from New Mexico and Texas. And, the CPUC gave Sempra the contract on a reduced basis costing Californians 1200 million cubic feet per day from New Mexico and Texas.

The CPUC also approved Sempra passing off the cost of its \$800 million terminal to California ratepayers. However they have not yet approved Sempra to lock in long-term contracts for LNG with California utilities. However, without such contracts, Sempra will likely not secure financial backing to build the Energía Costa Azul LNG receipt terminal.

However, Deputy Press Secretary Ng and Dan Skopec, the California Environmental Protection Agency Undersecretary, both on Wednesday at the Pepperdine AB32 bill signing flatly denied Schwarzenegger had appointed any of the CPUC commissioners when asked why the CPUC cancelled two of the natural gas contracts coming into California.

But in fact and as stated on the CPUC Web site, the Governor appoints the five Commissioners who must be confirmed by the Senate for six year staggered terms at a salary of \$114,191 per year. And, the Governor also appoints one of the five to serve as Commission President.

The current CPUC Commissioners, three of which were appointed by Schwarzenegger, are:

Michael R. Peevey, President of the CPUC, was appointed by Governor Davis on December 31, 2002. He was also previously President of Edison International and Southern California Edison Company from August 1990 through March 1993 and a senior executive there beginning in 1984.

Geoffrey F. Brown was appointed by Governor Davis in January of 2001 and confirmed in March by the State Senate. His term expires in January 2007.

Dian M. Grueneich (D) was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and was sworn in on January 18, 2005. Commissioner Grueneich and was confirmed by the State Senate on May 19, 2005. Her will term ends January 1, 2011.



ADV

John Bohn (R) was appointed by Schwarzenegger and was sworn in on May 5, 2005.

Rachelle Chong (R), the first Asian-American PUC Commissioner in California, was appointed by Schwarzenegger on January 11, 2006.

The CPUC regulates privately owned telecommunications, electric, natural gas, water, railroad, rail transit, and passenger transportation companies and is responsible for ensuring customers have safe, reliable utility service at reasonable rates, protecting against fraud, and promoting the health of California's economy. Commission orders have the force of law on utilities and rates paid by customers.

Recent polls conducted have shown Schwarzenegger still has a lead on Angelides. The Public Policy Institute of California poll found the Governor has a 17 per cent lead over Angelides at 48 to 31 per cent. A Field Poll released September 27 shows Schwarzenegger's lead is less at 44 to 34 per cent.

However, another recent Field Poll shows Schwarzenegger's job approval rating is still very low. According to the poll released today, voter opinions of Schwarzenegger's performance throughout 2006 are at 48 per cent approving and 37 per cent disapproving of the job he is doing as Governor. And only 49 per cent of Californians feel the state is headed in the right direction. This figure is up by only 2 per cent from a Field Poll completed in May 2006. The poll also stated the number of Californians who do not feel Schwarzenegger's leadership capabilities are "providing the leadership that California needs right now" have increased from 38 per cent to 43 per cent.

"Everyone in the world knows Schwarzenegger and despite all that, and despite \$30 Million in attack ads funded by his Bush-Cheney campaign team that the White House sent out here to prop him up, despite all that, the Governor is stuck in the 40's in every poll," Angelides said when asked how he planned to overcome the Governor's margin in the polls.

Analysis of the polls shows Angelides is still an unclear question mark in voters' minds. Most seem to not yet know where the candidate stands on certain issues of concern to them. And the Governor's campaign is keen on this issue only agreeing to one debate to be held in Sacramento.

The Governor is loosing some support in key areas such as Malibu and is having to distance himself in job performance from President Bush. Pollsters recently conducted a study on this subject. The results showed while the numbers are slightly higher for Schwarzenegger, the trends for the Governor are still in-line with the disappointments Americans feel about Bush.

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