
Northwest faith and social justice leaders call out moral issues regarding LNG safety risks for individuals at the Northwest Detention Center

Dear Mayor Woodards, Tacoma City Council Members, and Fire Chief Duggan,

We all share a deep concern for the health and safety of Tacoma and its residents. As you know, Puget Sound Energy's eight million gallon liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility would add three waterfront hazard areas at bunkering locations, as well as land-based fire hazards that compound risks for the Tideflats.

The LNG project's Environmental Impact Statement suggests that there are official hazard mitigation efforts and a joint emergency response plan for Tacoma. Yet virtually none of this information appears to be available to the public. In fact, there is no publicly-available emergency response plan that addresses the many concerns of the community about accidents related to the LNG facility, whether from the liquefaction process, on-site storage, trucking, rail transport, marine bunkering, pipeline transmission, or other operations.

It is clear, however, that in the event of an accident, the potential hazard zone of the LNG facility could include Puyallup tribal homelands, Tacoma residents, and community centers like schools and daycare centers. Of special concern is the proximity of the LNG plant to the Northwest Detention Center, itself a facility that the Council has condemned for "breaches of health, safety, civil rights and human dignity."

No official document explains how the 1,575 people that can be detained at the facility would be kept safe in the event of an emergency. It is believed that the emergency response plan for the Detention Center requires people to "shelter in place," a course of action that would raise serious questions about the safety of those who are detained.

The below signed organizations see the location of the Northwest Detention Center within the LNG hazard zone as a moral issue presenting a potential human rights violation that cannot be overlooked.

Therefore, we affirm the Puyallup Tribe's request for a supplemental EIS that would properly address the project's safety risks. We ask that the City complete this analysis and address the special threats to those who are detained at the Northwest Detention Center.

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We appreciate your leadership and ask that you please do what is right to protect all of Tacoma.

Sincerely,

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The Conversation