



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Leads Coalition of Attorneys General Challenging Trump Administration's Authorization of Rail Transportation of LNG

Rule Would Allow the Shipment of Explosive Cargo Through Communities Nationwide

BALTIMORE, MD (August 18, 2020) - Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today led a coalition of 15 attorneys general in asking the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to review the Trump Administration's rushed attempt to open the nation's railways to the bulk shipment of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) itself predicts that the LNG by Rail rule will introduce unit trains comprised of 80-100 tank cars, with each tank car carrying over 30,000 gallons of LNG, to our nationwide rail network.

"Ships carrying LNG have been characterized as floating bombs," said Attorney General Frosh. "Rolling tank cars filled with LNG through our neighborhoods are vastly more dangerous. This proposal is heedless of the risks to the safety of our families and our natural resources posed by moving massive quantities of LNG by rail through our cities, towns."

LNG is an extremely hazardous substance that must be stored below -260°F to maintain its liquid state. When exposed to atmospheric conditions, a liquid LNG pool will quickly volatilize into natural gas, creating a super cold cloud of odorless, flammable, and potentially explosive gas. If ignited the ensuing gas cloud will burn back to its liquid source creating an inextinguishable pool or jet fire. Gas clouds have also been observed to travel far downwind from their release point, bringing the risk of explosion to unsuspecting communities.

The LNG by Rail Rule imposes only minimal operational controls on trains carrying LNG. The rule explicitly rejects any use of mandatory speed limits or the imposition of measures to protect rail crews from their hazardous cargo. Moreover, PHMSA provides no support for concluding that the few operational controls that it does require from LNG trains, namely the remote monitoring of tank pressures, non-binding routing criteria, the use of brake technology with a checkered safety history, and an increased tank shell thickness, will reduce the risk of catastrophic accident. Nor does PHMSA provide any support for increasing the allowed filling capacity of each LNG tank car from the amount suggested in the proposed rule. PHMSA's decision to rely on an absence of data to support its conclusions is unjustifiable given that several studies to examine the safety of transporting LNG in rail tank cars are due to be completed in the next few years.

In addition to Maryland, the [petition](#) was joined by the attorneys general of California, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

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