

The Health Impacts of LNG-by-Rail

The Trump Administration is seeking to create new federal authorizations for transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) by rail. A glut of methane gas production in the U.S. has been fueled by the process of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"), and approximately 2/3 of methane gas transported in the U.S. is fracked.

Transporting liquefied fracked gas by rail is a dangerous proposal that would threaten health and safety throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Here are some of the health threats of LNG-by-rail:

- Derailements and spills:

The U.S. rail system is aging, and fossil fuel train derailements are becoming increasingly common. Should an LNG car derail and be punctured in a similar manner to the oil train derailement in Mosier, OR in June 2016, a number of events may occur as LNG makes its way into the environment, including:

- Highly flammable LNG pools
- Vapor clouds that may spread over a multi-mile radius and ignite, spreading fire back to the spill source
- Asphyxiation from LNG vapor clouds
- Flash-freezing skin directly contacted by LNG
- Extremely hot LNG fires that can cause second-degree burns up to a mile away

- Train impacts:

Diesel particulate matter from transporting additional heavy fossil fuel cargo will impact railroad communities. In addition, the proposed LNG-by-rail rules are more lax than current oil train standards: trains would be allowed to travel at 50 mph (rather than the 40 mph standard for oil trains) and would be allowed to carry heavier loads on longer trains.

- Emergency Response

The proposed rules suggest evacuation if an accident occurs. That can cause additional derailed train cars to explode. Additionally, many first responders are not familiar with the unique risks of LNG leaks.



Oil train derailement & fire in Mosier, OR, June 2016

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