

Schuyler legislature supports gas storage changes

SCHUYLER COUNTY (8/10/16)--Crestwood announced they will be dialing back their proposed liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage project in the town of Reading Monday, Aug. 8. Crestwood submitted the proposed changes to the Department of Environmental Conservation Monday, reducing the overall scale of the project, while also making changes to the way LPG will be transported.

The Schuyler County Legislature also passed a resolution renewing their support of the project and urging state officials to issue the necessary approvals for the project to move forward. However, this came after a heated discussion amongst crowd members, many of whom spoke against the project despite the project alterations.

"The changes described will reduce the scale and environmental impacts (potential, actual, and perceived) of the project, respond meaningfully to the concerns expressed by those participating in the issues conference and by stakeholders outside of the DEC proceeding, and will result in further avoidance or mitigation of the impacts," according to a letter to DEC Chief Administrative Judge James T. McClymonds by Robert Alessi of DLA Piper, speaking on behalf of the project applicant Finger Lakes LPG Storage LLC.

The changes include:

- Reducing storage capacity almost 30 percent (from 2.1 million barrels to 1.5 million barrels).
- Storing only propane in the storage caverns (eliminating the proposed butane storage).
- Eliminating the proposed brine pond on the lake side of Route 14.
- Removing the rail and truck components (propane moves only by pipeline).

Even with the reduced project scale, there were still several people who spoke against the Schuyler Legislature's support of the project Monday. More than 30 people attended the meeting, with some speaking in favor of the project as well

Steve Churchill, Seneca County supervisor, distributed a leaflet to the legislators noting the high salinity levels in Seneca Lake as well as the several surrounding municipalities who have come out against the project. He also said the salt content of the water is above recommended levels for consumption.

Legislative Chairman Dennis Fagan addressed his concerns with this information, noting the salinity levels in the lake have been decreasing, while Legislator James Howell Jr. added the recommended levels are not safety maximums. Legislator Phil Barnes also said he saw the minutes of several municipalities who passed resolutions against the storage project, noting that very few of them had representation from Crestwood and did not hear the other side of the story.

Legislator Barbara Halpin said this resolution is not the final approval on the project, noting it is merely the legislature voicing their opinion, similar to the way other municipalities did with their opposition.

County Attorney Steven Getman agreed, saying a county legislature has the constitutional right to voice their opinions as well as individuals, adding there is no liability in the resolution.

When a vote was finally taken after a lengthy discussion, the measure passed six votes to two.

More here: <http://tinyurl.com/guoe3m6>

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