

September 12, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

Tristan Brown
Deputy Administrator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials &
Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Chairman Richard Glick
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Secs. Buttigieg and Granholm, Deputy Administrator Brown, and Chairman Glick,

We write in continuing frustration regarding the federal government's failure in responding to the June 8th explosion at the Freeport, Texas Liquefied Natural Gas export facility. The Biden Administration's failure to provide meaningful oversight, transparency, and accountability of these facilities exacerbates the burdens gas export terminals impose on frontline and environmental justice communities, especially across the Gulf Coast. The Freeport LNG explosion revealed systemic problems that the Departments of Transportation and Energy must address with urgency and diligence.

We call on the Biden Administration to do the following:

- **Hold a Freeport Public Meeting:** Prior to the Freeport LNG facility being allowed to return to full operation, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials & Safety Administration must hold a public meeting in Freeport, Texas to explain its investigation into the explosion. PHMSA should explain its findings and respond to questions from the community regarding the cause of the explosion, the facility's history of safety violations, the emergency response, and the necessary corrective measures.
- **Update Emergency Response Plans:** The Freeport explosion, and the subsequent response, revealed systemic failings in the emergency response planning and accountability. Over the course of hours and eventually days, residents were left in the dark with little to no understanding of the explosion, its health or environmental impacts, or the emergency response. Yet, PHMSA knew in August 2021 that [Freeport LNG lacked an adequate emergency response plan](#), after it investigated a fire that

occurred at the same facility in October 2020. PHMSA and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should make [emergency response plans](#) for gas export terminals easily accessible to communities across the Gulf. PHMSA and FERC should review the adequacy of those plans and require updates when communities, emergency responders, and other governmental entities identify infirmities. PHMSA should also adopt requirements to provide greater transparency around emergency response plans and PHMSA's inspections and review of those plans, so the affected communities understand the risks and responses.

- **Develop Gas Export Terminal Regulations:** PHMSA must conduct a review of the rules and regulations governing gas export infrastructure and terminals based on contemporary information. The [regulations that currently apply to gas export terminals are more than 40 years old](#) and were never intended to cover the unique risks and conditions that gas export terminals pose. PHMSA needs new regulations that [account for the differences between gas import and export terminals](#), including the risk of vapor cloud explosions at gas export facilities. To ensure the safety of the people working at export terminals and who live in nearby communities, PHMSA needs to conduct a transparent safety review of all gas export terminals and issue meaningful penalties for violations.

We implore you to address the government's ongoing failure to provide adequate oversight of gas export terminals. Ignoring these systemic infirmities perpetuates the racially and economically disproportionate and cumulative impacts of pollution and health and human safety concerns for residents, especially in the Gulf Coast region. Additionally, consumers across the country are confronting the [direct connection](#) between [gas exports and higher domestic gas prices](#) and electricity costs.

We stand ready to work with you to ensure actions are taken to give community members answers about the Freeport LNG explosion and, more broadly, to ensure the health and safety of community members across the Gulf Coast. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Melanie Oldham, Founder, Citizens for Clean Air & Clean Water of Freeport and Brazoria County

Joanie Steinhaus, Gulf Program Director, Turtle Island Restoration Network

Collin Rees, United States Program Manager, Oil Change International

Drew Hudson, Founder, 198 Methods

Kourtney Dunning, Social Media Lead, Power Shift Network

Sierra Club, Re: [June 23rd follow up letter regarding LNG explosion: signed by over 120 orgs](#)

Jeffrey Jacoby, Deputy Director, Texas Campaign for the Environment

Naomi Yoder, Staff Scientist, Healthy Gulf
Elida Castillo, Program Director, Chispa Texas
Robin Schneider, Executive Director, Texas Campaign for the Environment
Roishetta Ozane, Director, The Vessel Project of Louisiana
Donna Robinson, Administrator, Stop SPOT and Gulflink
Ted Glick, Organizer, Beyond Extreme Energy
Property Rights and Pipeline Center
Juan B. Mancias, Tribal Chairman, Executive Director, Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas
Sabrina Chapa, Program Manager, Anthropocene Alliance
Seth Laxman, Climate Campaigner, Greenpeace USA
Leah Donahey, Federal Advocacy Campaigns Director, League of Conservation Voters
Zorka Milin, Senior Advisor, Global Witness
Ilan Levin, Associate Director, Environmental Integrity Project
Miyoko Sakashita, Senior Counsel, Center for Biological Diversity
Lauren Pagel, Policy Director, Earthworks

cc: Ms. Mary McDaniel, Director, Southwest Region, Office of Pipeline Safety, PHMSA
FERC, Houston Office

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