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1,000 gather to protest LNG development

A group of 1,000 protesters took over the St. Andrews, N.B., wharf Tuesday to protest proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal developments in the area.

Protesters said the three LNG terminals proposed for the Passamoquoddy Bay would affect the environment as well as quality of life and tourism in the area.

Two American natural gas companies have applied to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Committee for the right to pass through New Brunswick waters to terminals on the northeast coast of Maine. If the application, which is still under review, is approved, there could be a steady stream of freighters in the area.

The federal and provincial governments have joined with residents and voiced opposition to the passage of the tankers, which are approximately 12 storeys high and four football fields long.

Margot Sackett, with the group Save Passamoquoddy Bay Canada, said there are numerous reasons why the projects should not be approved.

"Passamoquoddy Bay is an extraordinary resource, marine and cultural resource," she told CBC News. "The entrance is in Canadian waters, the tankers would have to go through those and through the very dangerous Head Harbour Passage … it's a very unsuitable place to place LNG terminals."

For residents, the prospect of constant tanker traffic is a big concern.

"It's hard for me to think that my life wouldn't be impacted by a freighter the size of four football fields coming down that view line," said local resident Gwenda Gauley.

St. Andrews Mayor John Craig said the area's tourism industry could also be jeopardized if the project is approved.

"We're a tourism area, it's not an industrial area," he said. "Don't mix the two together, and we don't want our way of life destroyed by this sort of thing put in the Passamaquoddy Bay."

Residents on the American side of the bay also joined Tuesday's protest.

"This is a bay effort, it isn't an individual effort. Maine and certainly the U.S. have got to understand that it's not just little bitty bitty town after bitty town. It is in fact the whole bay," said Suzanne Crawford, who lives across the bay from St. Andrews.

The decision on the LNG projects could take a long time. Protesters said they would continue their efforts until they can be sure tankers won't be allowed in the bay.