Guide to the Collection of California Coastal Commission Liquefied Natural Gas Files

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Guide to the Collection of  
California Coastal Commission  
Liquefied Natural Gas Files

Descriptive Summary
Title: California Coastal Commission Liquefied Natural Gas files
Date: 1970-1983.
Date (bulk): bulk 1977-1978
Collection Number: MS-R140
Creator: California Coastal Commission
Extent: 3.6 linear feet (9 boxes)
Languages: The collection is in English.
Repository: University of California, Irvine. Library. Special Collections and Archives.
Irvine, California 92623-9557
Abstract: The California Coastal Commission Liquefied Natural Gas files contain reports, correspondence, court records, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous files relating to liquefied natural gas (LNG) sites proposed by several public utility companies in 1972. The California Coastal Commission was created through the California Coastal Act to prevent the privatization of California's beaches through the regulation of land and water use in the coast. At the time of the LNG proposals the California Coastal Commission was the state authority for approving and permitting rights for LNG terminals.

Access
The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
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For the benefit of current and future researchers, please cite any additional information about sources consulted in this collection, including permanent URLs, item or folder descriptions, and box/folder locations.

Acquisition Information
Transferred from the UCI Libraries Government Documents Division, date unknown.

Processing History
Processed by Joanna Lamb, 2008.

Historical Background
The California Coastal Commission was established by voter initiative in 1972 to identify and prevent ecological and environmental dangers threatening California's coastal landscape and to protect coastal land from privatization. Since the California Legislature passed the California Coastal Act of 1976, the Coastal Commission has planned and regulated the use of land and water in the coastal zone through reviews of local and federal government programs and activities.

In the late 1960s, declining domestic natural gas reserves resulting from federal price controls on interstate gas led some U.S. utility firms to explore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports as an alternative source of natural gas. Western LNG Terminal Company, Pacific Gas and Electric, and El Paso Natural Gas Company proposed to build and employ LNG import facilities at multiple California coastal sites in 1972. The Port of Los Angeles, Oxnard, and Point Conception were first identified as prospective LNG Terminal sites; however, the three state agencies involved with siting authority: the California Coastal Commission, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and the California Energy Commission were unable to approve the sites because of conflicts of interest stemming from environmental and safety concerns of the Coastal Commission.

The LNG Terminal Siting Act of 1977 was passed by California legislature to prevent a stalemate and increase the likelihood of site approval allowing for permitting of proposed LNG Terminal sites. The new law gave state siting authority for the project to CPUC, while simultaneously acknowledging environmental concerns by granting the Coastal Commission the task of identifying and ranking proposed sites that would mitigate environmental damage. The Coastal Commission initially evaluated 82 sites, and found only four met the strict population density standards and other protective criteria that they had established regarding wind and wave conditions, earthquake hazards, and soil conditions. Of these four, the Point Conception site was conditionally approved by the CPUC despite concerns about minimal seismic risks in the area.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) (formerly the FCP) also granted conditional approval of the Point Conception site. However, project opponents appealed FERC's approval, and the Federal courts remanded the case back to
FERC for reconsideration of seismic risk factors. Although the Point Conception site eventually regained conditional approval from FERC in 1983, the project was ultimately abandoned. The utility companies were forced to acknowledge that the project was no longer economically viable after Congress passed the Natural Gas Policy in 1978, which lifted price controls on domestic natural gas discovered after 1977 and diminished the cost of domestic LNG.

**Biography/Organization History**

1972  
Several public utilities announce plans to import LNG

1972  
The California Coastal Commission established by voter initiative

1976  
California Legislature adopts the California Coastal Act and makes permanent the California Coastal Commission as we know it today

1977  
California Legislation passes the LNG Terminal Siting Act of 1977

1978  
U.S. Congress passes Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978

1983  
FERC gives conditional approval to the Point Conception LNG Project site


**Collection Scope and Content Summary**

This collection comprises records assembled by the California Coastal Commission and associated with proposed LNG Terminal Site Projects in the 1970s. The bulk of this collection includes reports that were collected or created by the California Coastal Commission. Additionally the collection includes correspondence, LNG Terminal court records, miscellaneous LNG files, and LNG related newspaper clippings.

**Collection Arrangement**

This collection is arranged in alphabetical order by material type.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**

California Coastal Commission - - Archives

Coastal zone management -- California -- Archives

Liquefied natural gas -- California -- Archives

| Box : Folder 1 : | LNG correspondence 1977-1978 |
| 1-4 | General correspondence 1977-1978 |
| Box : Folder 1 : 5 | Opposition of LNG terminal sites correspondence 1978 March-April |
| Box : Folder 1 : 6 | Orange County work program correspondence 1978 December-August |
| Box : Folder 1 : 7 | Miscellaneous correspondence (bound) 1978 |

**LNG court records 1978 April-May**

| Box : Folder 2 : 1 | Legal Brief on Behalf of Western LNG Terminal Associates 1978 May 8 |
| Box : Folder 2 : 2-4 | Public hearing transcripts 1978 April |

**LNG terminal sites: newspaper clippings 1978**

| Box : Folder 2 : 5-6 | Miscellaneous LNG related files 1977-1979 |
| Box : Folder 2 : 7 | Documents and brochures (bound file) 1977-1978 |
| Box : Folder 2 : 8 | Cojo Bay magazine article and correspondence 1978 |
| Box : Folder 2 : 9 | Notes, recommendations, environmental factors and timelines 1978-1979 |
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Marine Review Committee report
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