

Presentation of David T. Butler, Chief of the Fire Department of the City of Everett

My name is David T. Butler and I am the Fire Chief in the City of Everett, Massachusetts. I come before you today not to speak in favor of or in opposition to any proposed LNG facility but to share with you my experience with the LNG industry. I have been an Everett Firefighter for 29 years, eighteen as a Chief Officer and have served as Chief of Department for the past seven years. I also have the privilege of being a member of the National Fire Protection Association 59A Technical Committee which is responsible for establishing Standards for the Production, Storage, and Handling of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). The National Fire Protection Association serves as the world's leading advocate of fire prevention and is an authoritative source on public safety. The NFPA's 300 consensus codes and standards influence every building, process, service, design, and installation in the United States, as well as many of those used in other countries.

The first LNG terminal in the United States was built in our city. Construction of the facility began in the late 1960's and began operation in 1971 with the first shipment of LNG arriving in November of that year. We have developed a very good working relationship with the terminal operators and they are and have always been a very good neighbor to our city.

From my close, personal experience with the LNG industry and their maritime and land operations, I can assure you this industry has an outstanding record as well as operating and regulatory rules that are so strict, they set the standard for hydrocarbon industries around the world. The safety record for LNG transportation by tanker has a history that quite impressive due to continuously improving technology, safety equipment, procedures, training and maintenance. Our terminal now receives over 70 tankers annually, and 753 voyages between Everett and the liquefaction terminals in Trinidad and Algeria have been without incident.

I have under my command 106 career firefighters who respond to over 5,000 emergency calls a year. In its 35 years of operation we have had three releases of LNG at the Everett Distrigas facility requiring a fire department response. Each release was mitigated with no impact to the environment, disruption to the supply chain or ignition of the product. This excellent safety record is the result of a combination of strict safety standards which are required of these facilities and the level to which the members of my department have been trained.

Identifying danger scenarios and their probabilities with command staff and specialists from around the world and determining the precise means and actions required in intervention situations are what Fire Chiefs do daily as professionals in our field. As a Fire Chief my major responsibility is the protection of life and property to the citizens who live and work in my city and most important are the lives and safety of the firefighters under my command. Chief Fire Officers are constantly faced with having to decide what is an acceptable risk both to his firefighters and the community. Firefighters are required to risk their lives on a daily basis but a Fire Chief would never agree to put the lives of his Firefighters in danger by the presence of a risk he knew to be unacceptable. As with any facility of this type we are aware of the fact that there are risks associated with it being located in our community but in consideration of the safety standards in place and the level to which we have trained we believe them to be acceptable risks

Having said that, and without putting words in the mouth of Lévis fire chief Dominique Fortin, I have an idea of what motivates him, because we both share a calling about which we are extremely passionate, and I firmly believe that anything unacceptable in terms of safety will not be tolerated here, either.

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