



LNG Vessel Liability is Limited by 1851 U.S. Law

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Liability for disasters caused by LNG tankers delivering liquefied natural gas to American coastal communities is severely limited by the current law of the United States.

(**PRWEB**) March 17, 2005 - Ironically, U.S. Law now protects foreign vessel owners transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) rather than protecting American citizens and U.S. coastal communities that could be incinerated and destroyed by an LNG tanker disaster.

Communities now facing LNG facility proposals throughout coastal America are worried about the safety of LNG, and want to know if LNG tanker owners would be responsible for American deaths, injuries and property damage resulting from an LNG spill and disaster.

People want to know if LNG tanker owners importing their dangerous cargo to America will be financially responsible for all the damage they cause," said consumer protection attorney Tim Riley who hosts a comprehensive LNG website <http://TimRileyLaw.com>.

According to Riley, who is licensed to practice law in New York and California, all LNG vessel owners are protected by the Limitation of Vessel Owner's Liability Act, 46 U.S.C. 181, et seq.; and the owner's liability is limited to the value of the vessel and value of its cargo contents remaining after a calamity occurs. The U.S. Supreme Court has long held that where a ship sinks after a calamity, the sinking is the termination of the voyage and the value of the vessel - thus the limitation of the ship owner's liability.

Ironically, the more damage that occurs to the LNG vessel, and the more cargo lost, the lower the liability for the vessel owner. This means that an LNG tanker disaster resulting in the total loss of the vessel and total loss of its cargo would result in minimal financial liability for the LNG vessel owner - even where the disaster incinerates an entire coastal community, killing and injuring thousands of Americans while destroying billions of dollars of property. Shockingly, the LNG tanker owner's financial liability in such a scenario for all property damage would be absolutely zero; and for the loss of thousands of American lives and thousands of severely burned victims, the vessel owners liability would be limited to just \$420 per vessel ton," attorney Riley explained.

Protecting vessel owners was originally established by the Limitation of Vessel Owner's Liability Act in 1851, and our Supreme Court has long held that the owner's duty is essentially satisfied when he properly equips the vessel and selects competent crew to operate it, and neither the vessel, nor her owners are responsible for damage or loss resulting from faults or errors in navigation or in the management of the vessel.

Sadly, wrongful death claims, burn victim claims, medical costs, loss of earnings, destruction of homes, cars, airplanes, businesses, stores full of inventory, industrial complexes, and infrastructure losses which would result from an LNG disaster would be left without adequate recourse or compensation.

There are approximately three dozen LNG importation facilities now being proposed throughout our United States coastline communities. Each facility would require gigantic LNG tankers holding the energy equivalent of 55 Hiroshima bombs, to deliver their ultra hazardous cargo dangerously close to coastal communities," said Hayden Riley who co-hosts the LNG website.

Most people don't know about LNG and the enormous risks it poses, because there are so few LNG importation facilities in the world. Currently the continental United States has only four operating facilities, three of which have never been continually operational since built in the late 70's; and even though the LNG industry has had limited activity in its short history - its safety record is truly alarming," Mrs. Riley said.

Two massive LNG disasters have already occurred. The first in Cleveland, Ohio in 1944, which killed 128 people, produced many burn victims and incinerated one square mile of that city; and the most recent LNG disaster, of January 2004, created more burn victims caused more deaths and destroyed approximately \$1 billion of property in remote Algeria. The photographs of the LNG disasters depicted on the Rileys website resemble Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped.

The tragic lesson learned from LNG disasters is that once the ultra hazardous liquefied natural gas is released from confinement, it instantaneously vaporizes and becomes an expanding ignitable vapor cloud of mass destruction incinerating everything and everyone in its path. LNG inferno temperatures are so extreme that the radiant heat produced causes death and destruction even outside the perimeter of the fiery blast.

On September 21, 2004, The Providence Journal, in an article entitled, "Lloyd's Executive Likens LNG Attack to Nuclear Explosion," that paper reported that a Lloyd's of London Insurance executive Peter Levene likened an LNG attack to a nuclear explosion. "Gas carriers too, whether at sea or in ports, make obvious targets," said Levene. "Specialists reckon that a terrorist attack on an LNG tanker would have the force of a small nuclear explosion."

Hayden Riley says, "The current proliferation of LNG proposals will result in the greater probability of another disaster. LNG facility proponents and vessel owners will never be able to guarantee our safety."

Attempting to minimize the tragic lesson of the Cleveland and the Algerian disasters, LNG proponents continuously hype LNG's self-proclaimed 'safety' record. They boldly maintain that their LNG facilities and tankers will operate and deliver LNG perfectly safe - always - without incident, and will be impervious to all natural calamity and terrorism. Such self-bravado is ridiculous and unrealistic, but if they truly believe all LNG operations will run perfectly safe in American communities, then they should back-up their claims by putting their money where their mouth is. All LNG vessel owners, LNG facility owners/operators, and the current LNG facility applicants should voluntarily agree to be held strictly liable and fully responsible for all harm caused by their ultra hazardous activities - without any financial limitations. But such voluntary compliance is equally unrealistic to expect." said attorney Riley. Our U.S. laws must be changed, and they should no longer protect foreign interests and the importers of LNG over the rights of American citizens," he added.

The Rileys maintain, "Protecting importers of foreign fossil fuel while exposing American citizens and communities to devastation without adequate recourse or recovery is shortsighted, irresponsible and requires immediate congressional action."

Tim and Hayden Riley have also produced a documentary film, The Risks and Danger of LNG, which highlights the hazards of LNG by demonstrating its vulnerability to accidental disaster and terrorism; and shows how massive its destruction can be. The film was an Official Selection of the Malibu Film Festival, 2004, and has received high praises by an international anti-terrorist expert.

To preview a short trailer of the movie and to purchase a DVD copy of the entire film, visit or <http://LngDanger.com> or <http://TimRileyLaw.com>