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Harbor island LNG plan dead, foe says Cites backing from senators

By Raja Mishra, Globe Staff | April 26, 2007

Efforts to build a liquefied natural gas terminal on Outer Brewster Island in Boston Harbor appear to be dead, according to a leading opponent. State Senator Robert L. Hedlund, Republican of Weymouth, said in an interview yesterday that he has received the commitments of enough members of the Senate to effectively block the terminal.

Hedlund said that AES Corp., the Virginia-based energy firm that proposed the terminal, needed the support of two-thirds of the Senate, but that he had pledges of opposition from more than a third of senators. During its last session,



the Senate took no action on a bill that would have allowed construction of the terminal. No bill is before the Senate, Hedlund said. The vote was required because the proposal was for protected parkland.

"It doesn't really matter what AES wants to do," said Hedlund. "I think they realize we have them beat." AES officials yesterday did not return calls for comment. The Patriot Ledger website reported yesterday that Aaron Samson, AES's managing director, had concluded the proposal was dead, at least for now, due to opposition.

AES's \$500 million plan called for construction of two 100-foot-deep tanks on one corner of Outer Brewster Island, which is unoccupied. The plan would have allowed LNG tankers to unload fuel offshore, eliminating security concerns over handling large amounts of LNG, which is potentially explosive, near populated areas.

Opponents said LNG tanks would have marred Outer Brewster Island, which is part of a network of islands in the Boston Harbor Islands National Park. "You have a lot of work that went into creating the national park," Hedlund said. ". . . By trying to carve out Outer Brewster, you destroy the integrity of the entire national harbor island park system. It made no sense, especially since there were alternatives." LNG facilities are proposed for locations off the coast of Gloucester and on a river in Fall River. Those sites would be run by different energy companies.

A coalition of local environmental groups opposed the Outer Brewster proposal. "We just don't have to crush an important part of this national park to meet the energy needs of the nation," said Bruce Berman of the nonprofit group Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, an opponent. "There are other options." ■