

Greenpeace opposes Italian gas terminal

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Environmental activists want to block Italian plans to install a floating natural gas terminal in the middle of a whale and dolphin sanctuary.

Under a plan approved by the Italian government, 40 to 50 tankers a year would transfer liquefied gas to the floating terminal, which then would pipe it to the mainland near Livorno, Britain's Independent reported Monday.

The terminal would float in the Cetaceans Sanctuary of the Mediterranean -- home to striped dolphins, fin whales and sperm whales.

Greenpeace and other environmental groups say the terminal would be in a seismically active area where strong winds would make it hazardous to transfer liquid gas, the Independent reported.

Thousands of tons of toxic mud dumped on the sea floor decades ago would be stirred by anchoring ships and terminal moorings, said Alessandro Gianni, a spokesman for Greenpeace. Gianni said also that a steady discharge of chlorine bleach used to clean the platform's seawater intake pipes would kill everything below.

The Italian government says the benefits of the much-needed energy outweigh the risks of the project, the Independent reported.

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