

PRESIDENT BIDEN IS SET TO CHOKE THE WORLD'S CLIMATE IN FOSSIL GAS

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The US is set to become the world's top exporter of liquefied fossil gas by 2023, on Biden's watch. This catastrophic gas expansion would undermine his promises on climate justice and stand in stark contrast to efforts to position himself as a global climate leader. The Biden administration should end US support for fossil gas and Build Back Fossil Free.

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KEY FINDINGS

Last year, President Biden was elected on a wave of youth-led support from citizens concerned about the climate crisis, who pushed him to make stronger climate pledges. His victory gave many people in the US and around the world a glimmer of hope that under his leadership, the country would turn over a new leaf and reverse course from the damaging policies of the previous US administration under Donald Trump. Since coming to power, Biden has sought to position himself and the US as a global climate leader, re-joining the UN Paris Climate Agreement and hosting multiple international climate leadership summits.

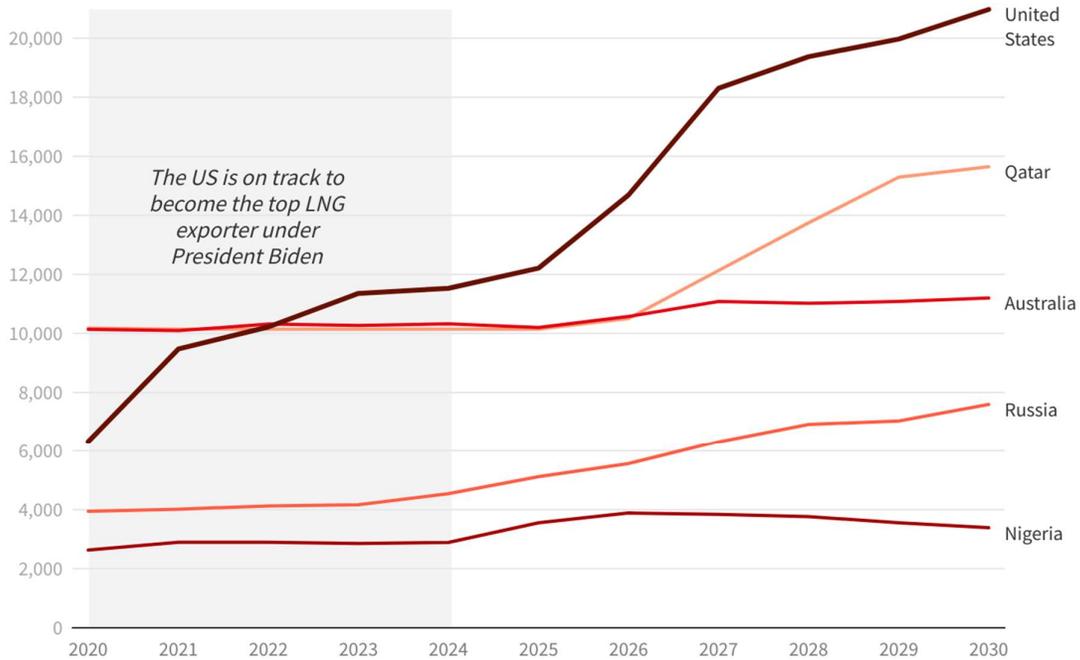
Disappointingly, our analysis shows that notwithstanding the official US rhetoric on climate, Biden's administration is continuing some of the same anti-climate policies of the Trump administration, which continue to drive record-breaking growth in US fossil fuel extraction and export. Our analysis shows that, contrary to Biden's claims of climate leadership, the troubling trend of the US fossil gas boom is currently set to continue on Biden's watch.

Our latest analysis of data from Rystad Energy, one of the world's leading energy research companies, takes a closer look at the US extraction and export of gas – the world's fastest growing fossil fuel. **We find that:**

- > In the first half of 2021, US gas exports grew to record highs, according to US government data.¹
- > Over the course of Biden's presidency, by 2023, the US is projected to become the world's top exporter of climate-wrecking liquefied fossil gas, also known as "liquefied natural gas" or LNG.
- > US LNG exports are set to more than double, seeing a 121% increase, over the next decade to 2030.
- > To be aligned with limiting warming to 1.5°C no gas from new fields – those not already in production or development – should be extracted. Unlike gas fields that are already producing, these new fields are easier to prevent from coming online because the relevant investment decisions haven't been made yet.
- > If it was on track for 1.5°C, US gas production would drop by two thirds without these new fields. Instead, total US gas production is expected to rise by 17% over the next decade.
- > The majority of all the new gas production in the world over the next decade is set to come from the US, nearly 5 times as much as the next largest producer - Canada - and more than all other countries combined.
- > Forecast new gas production from Texas alone is more than any other country in the world.

TOP 5 LNG EXPORTERS BY 2030

Million cubic feet per day



Source: Rystad Energy

There can be no excuse for the US to continue on this misguided path. It is abundantly clear that any production of gas or oil from new fields is incompatible with the Paris climate goals, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), echoing previous analyses by Oil Change International, Global Witness and others.² When the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released its latest assessment of the state of the climate crisis, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres described it as “code red for humanity” and warned that “This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet.”³

If the Biden administration continues to ignore these stark scientific warnings and chooses to preside over a record gas boom, it will overshadow any claim to climate leadership. Unless the current US administration urgently changes course, its lasting legacy will be to push the world irrevocably towards climate

catastrophe. It would also leave marginalized communities in the US exposed to disproportionate pollution and health impacts from the fossil gas industry. This runs counter to President Biden’s stated commitment to fighting for environmental justice, which he claims is critical to his domestic climate agenda.⁴

As we detail here, first to pay the high price of gas extraction and export are marginalized domestic communities, most often communities of color along the Gulf Coast where a whole slew of gas export terminals and other infrastructure is being built (Part I). The rest of the world also stands to suffer from being locked into fossil fuel dependence for decades to come, at a time when renewable alternatives are not only readily available, but in many places cheaper than gas (Part II). Past US administrations have acted as advocates for the industry’s interests at the expense of people and the planet (Part III), but it doesn’t have to be this way. The Biden

administration now has the opportunity to chart a fresh approach to tackling the problem of the world's fastest growing fossil fuel, and establish its climate credentials by reversing course from past mistakes (Part IV).

PART I: US GAS EXPORTS HARM COMMUNITIES IN THE US

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is a movement that draws on the civil rights movement to tackle environmental racism – the hard fact that race maps closely with pollution and elevated environmental health threats.⁵ The gas industry is no exception. US gas infrastructure is often located in or nearby to communities of color, where it exacerbates the elevated pollution and health risks those communities have historically faced.⁶ President Biden has recognized this problem and touted commitment to solve it: in his presidential campaign, environmental justice featured prominently in his platform.⁷ During his first week in office, he issued an executive order on climate which directed all federal agencies to tackle environmental injustice, formed a new White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and created the Justice40 initiative with the goal of delivering 40% of the overall benefits of government climate investments to disadvantaged communities.⁸ A key test of Biden's commitment is whether his administration will turn a blind eye to the environmental injustices of gas.



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1. Gas infrastructure is too dangerous

The infrastructure used to produce and transport gas poses significant risks to public safety, from accidents to explosions and other incidents that put the lives of workers and the public at risk. This was recently demonstrated in a dramatic fashion when an underwater gas pipeline leak in the Gulf of Mexico set the ocean on fire in July 2021.⁹

The primary safety concern with gas is explosions, which can occur along the supply chain from the drilling site, in pipelines or during transport. In its gaseous state, gas is extremely flammable, and can cause deadly and costly explosions. According to the research organization FracTracker, between 2010 and 2019, the US government recorded 1,226 gas pipeline safety incidents (including fires and explosions) in the US, which killed 25 people, injured 108 people, and caused \$1.3 billion in damages.¹⁰ These figures capture pipelines, which collect and bring gas from the well to the processing facilities, known as gas gathering lines; but given that only an estimated 5% of such pipelines are required to report to the federal government, the real numbers are likely to be higher.¹¹

In its liquefied state, LNG is not itself flammable, but LNG vapors are highly combustible and when exposed to air, expand by approximately 600%.¹² The catastrophic risks of a gas explosion were tragically demonstrated when an LNG tank exploded in Staten Island, New York in 1973, claiming the lives of 40 workers and spurring officials to impose moratoriums on LNG facilities in New York City and New York state.¹³ In addition to gas itself, another, potentially even more serious safety risk is posed by refrigerants – hydrocarbons used to chill the gas into a liquid. A refrigerant leak at an LNG export terminal could form a vapor cloud with the potential to result in a major explosion, according to engineering experts.¹⁴

2. Gas fracking is too harmful to health

The majority of fossil gas in the US is now extracted using a technology known as hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, that injects huge amounts of water mixed with chemicals at very high pressure to break underground rock formations and force out the gas that is trapped inside.¹⁵ It poses significant health risks to surrounding communities, as confirmed in numerous studies and in a detailed review of medical literature by Physicians for Social Responsibility.¹⁶

“Public health harms now linked with drilling, fracking, and associated infrastructure include cancers, asthma, respiratory distress, rashes, heart problems, and mental health problems. Multiple studies of pregnant women living near fracking operations across the nation show impairments to infant health, including birth defects, preterm birth, and low birth weight.”

- Physicians for Social Responsibility¹⁷

Increased reproductive and maternal health risks of fracking. These findings have been confirmed in numerous peer-reviewed scientific studies of fracking around the US, including Pennsylvania, Texas and Oklahoma.¹⁸ Moreover, studies in Texas and California have found that these risks tend to disproportionately impact pregnant women of color.¹⁹

Increased cancer risks. A 2016 study in southwest Pennsylvania found elevated rates of bladder and thyroid cancers in counties with fracking activity,²⁰ and studies have also shown significant cancer risks for children and young adults living in areas with fracking.²¹ A 2021 study

of five Pennsylvania families living near fracking found that they are exposed to harmful chemicals, including some that are linked to increased cancer risk, among other health harms.²² In response, Pennsylvania legislators are pushing the state’s governor to comprehensively investigate the health impacts of fracking.²³

These health risks disproportionately impact communities of color. According to a 2017 report by the leading civil rights group National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) together with Clean Air Task Force, over one million Black Americans live in counties that face a cancer risk above the Environmental Protection Agency’s level of concern from toxic pollutants emitted by gas facilities.²⁴ In addition, the health of Latinx communities could be particularly impacted by the looming LNG buildout in Texas, including the two projects proposed to be built in Cameron County, Texas.²⁵ One of the proposed terminals would run through sacred burial grounds of the Carrizo/Comecrudo tribe, which has staunchly opposed the project.²⁶

“These export terminals would also bulldoze native wildlife habitats, threaten sacred Indigenous historical sites, hurt our local ecotourism economy, release toxic air pollution into our Latinx communities, and contribute to the threat of climate change.”

- Rebekah Hinojosa, Senior Gulf Coast Campaign Representative, Sierra Club²⁷

The majority of the planned and existing US gas export terminals are along the Gulf of Mexico.²⁸ Effectively, this region is becoming a quintessential fossil fuel “sacrifice zone”, permanently impairing the local land and environment for the benefit of the industry and at

the expense of the communities of low-income and people of color who live there.

3. Gas is too damaging to the environment

The environmental impact of gas extraction and export facilities are myriad and include air pollution, water pollution, and destruction of natural habitats in the US.

Air pollution. Gas extraction, transport and use releases methane and other greenhouse gases (GHGs). LNG terminals also contribute to air pollution through the release of lung-damaging sulfur dioxide; nitrogen oxides that produce smog; particulates that cause asthma; and carbon monoxide.²⁹ A 2020 analysis of ten proposed US LNG projects by the Environmental Integrity Project found that six new LNG terminals and four expansions, most along the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana, could be massive polluters. Were all to be built, their annual emissions levels could – legally – be as high as 2,152 tons of particulate matter (PM 2.5), 12,495 tons of nitrogen oxides, 1,995 tons of volatile organic compounds, 527 tons of sulfur dioxide, and 27,376 tons of carbon monoxide.³⁰

Water contamination. Fracking requires staggering amounts of water, potentially hurting aquatic habitats and the availability of water for other uses. It also negatively impacts water quality, according to a recent study which found a small but consistent increase in concentrations of three harmful salts: barium which may lead to increases in blood pressure, chloride which can threaten aquatic life, and strontium which can have adverse impacts on bone development.³¹ According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, “There have been documented cases of groundwater near oil and gas wells being contaminated with fracking fluids as well as with gases, including methane and volatile organic compounds. One major cause of gas contamination is improperly constructed or failing wells that allow gas to leak from the well

into groundwater. Cases of contamination have been documented in Ohio and Pennsylvania.”³²

Wetlands and marine life: Rainforest Action Network notes that “most potential LNG export terminals are built or proposed to be built on or near wetlands around the Gulf of Mexico, harming natural landscapes and threatening wildlife”, including more than two dozen protected species and five threatened or endangered turtle species.³³ Ships which transport LNG from the terminals could strike and kill nearby marine life, as well as animals that are drawn to the area.³⁴ Additionally, “many [LNG] projects require excavation and dredging of waterways for the enormous ships to pass through, a process which inevitably disturbs marine areas, especially nurseries.”³⁵

PART II: US GAS EXPORTS HARM THE PLANET

1. Gas and LNG are climate disasters

“Gas is still a fossil fuel, and gas is mostly methane, so it leaks and also produces CO2. It’s not, in our judgment, anything near a long-term solution, unless somebody discovers one-hundred-percent abatement.”

– US Climate Envoy John Kerry in an interview to New Yorker magazine, August 2021³⁶

Gas is not necessarily better for climate than coal. Gas has been touted as a means to reduce GHG emissions by replacing coal. Although gas-fired power plants emit about half the CO2 of a coal plant, it is still the third most carbon intensive electricity supply technology in the world, a particular concern given expected gas growth.³⁷ In addition, the extraction, processing, and transport of gas also emits large amounts of another GHG, methane, from leaks and

intentional releases at wells, pipelines, and storage and processing facilities. Methane is the principal component of gas, and while not as long-lasting as CO₂, its climate impact is more than 80 times stronger in the short-term and still 28 times stronger over the long-term.³⁸ According to environmental group Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), “Unless methane leakage rates are kept at very low levels, replacing coal-fired power plants with gas plants fueled by imported U.S. LNG may actually provide little or no climate benefit to either the importing countries or the world.”³⁹



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US LNG buildout is incompatible with climate goals. According to the IEA’s recent report “Net Zero by 2050”, to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, gas use would have to fall by more than half its current level, meaning that no new gas fields should be developed and neither should many of the proposed LNG facilities.⁴⁰ According to analysis by Bloomberg, if all of the 18 US LNG export terminals that were approved or in use as of January 2020 were to be completed, “simply operating them could spew 78 million tons of CO₂ into the air every year,” which the outlet said is “comparable to the emissions of 24 coal plants, or 18 gigawatts of coal-fired power – more than

Kentucky’s entire coal fleet.”⁴¹ Liquefying the gas, shipping it across the ocean, and then regasifying it back are all energy-intensive activities with significant GHG emissions, accounting for 21% of the lifecycle total, according to NRDC.⁴²

2. Locking other countries into fossil fuel dependence

“The problem with gas is, if we build out a huge infrastructure for gas now to continue to use it as the bridge fuel—when we haven’t really exhausted the other possibilities—we’re going to be stuck with stranded assets in ten, twenty, thirty years.”

- US Climate Envoy John Kerry, World Economic Forum in Davos, January 2021⁴³

Continued buildout of gas infrastructure in countries that import US gas risks locking in future GHG emissions that countries cannot afford, if they are to meet their Paris goals. The IPCC has previously warned against “the economic and institutional lock-in into carbon-intensive infrastructure, that is, the continued investment in and use of carbon-intensive technologies that are difficult or costly to phase-out once deployed.”⁴⁴

Gas infrastructure is very expensive to build, and the costs are justified on the assumption that the projects will continue to operate and turn a profit for decades to come. A typical gas-fired power plant has a lifespan of 30 years and LNG terminals at least 25 years.⁴⁵ Yet Global Witness analysis of the IPCC’s climate scenarios shows that global use of fossil gas must decline by nearly two thirds by 2050 to keep warming below 1.5C, without excessive reliance on carbon capture or removal.⁴⁶ Continuing to use new gas infrastructure being built now for its full expected lifetime (of 30 years) would result in emissions that far exceed what the world’s climate can

afford if we're to avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis.



© Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP via Getty Images. An LNG processing plant in Cameron, Louisiana faced the risk of severe storm surge from Hurricane Laura in 2020.

The risk of stranded assets as importing countries move away from gas. Policymakers in some receiving markets are increasingly taking note of this lock-in problem and are moving away from gas. According to analysis by IEEFA “In Europe, prospects for gas imports—once viewed as a transition fuel to low-carbon energy sources—have faltered as European governments adopt aggressive government climate targets”.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the falling cost of renewable alternatives threatens gas demand in Europe’s power sector. Spain is now looking to turn to renewables in response to high gas prices.⁴⁸ Together, these trends have led many analysts to conclude that the continent’s LNG ambitions have already peaked; as the President of the European Investment Bank recently declared: “To put it mildly, gas is over.” The issue has been explicitly acknowledged by senior officials in the European Commission. Frans Timmermans, the First Vice President of the European Commission, said earlier this year that fossil gas has no viable future.⁴⁹

This move is not isolated to Europe. When another major LNG importer, Japan, recently revised its 2030 energy mix targets, it reduced gas in favor of renewables.⁵⁰ Absent aggressive US government pressure on behalf of its gas exporters, more countries can be expected to

follow suit and increasingly opt out of relying on gas. As international demand dries up, this will create major risks of stranded assets for US gas companies and their investors.

3. Other countries don’t need gas – renewables are cheaper

The lock-in of gas and associated GHG emissions is avoidable. Gas is not the only choice – it’s hugely polluting, and it’s also not the cheapest source of energy. Analyses by energy and financial experts have concluded that renewables are a competitive alternative to fossil gas. According to the financial advisory and asset management firm Lazard, the median costs of renewable energy sources -- including certain types of solar, geothermal, and wind -- are far less expensive than costs of fossil fuels, including coal and gas.⁵¹ A BloombergNEF analysis found that building new renewable energy sources is already cheaper for more than two-thirds of the world population than building new fossil fuel infrastructure.⁵² In particular, for low- and middle-income countries, gas is not needed as, for most of its uses, renewable-based alternatives are either already cheaper or are expected to be within a few years.⁵³ Moreover, in nearly half of the world – including much of Europe, as well as China and India – it is cheaper to build new large-scale wind and solar infrastructure than to run existing fossil fuel plants.⁵⁴

PART III: PROBLEMS WITH US POLICIES ON GAS EXPORTS

1. US greenlights gas exports and LNG projects without accounting for their climate impacts

The serious climate and environmental costs of gas described above are largely absent from the US government’s decision-making on gas exports.

Neither of the two US agencies tasked with approving gas exports take into account their

climate impacts. Two US regulators have critical authority over US gas exports: the Department of Energy (DOE) reviews applications to export LNG, and FERC reviews applications for new LNG export terminals and associated gas pipelines.⁵⁵ To issue a permit, each agency is required by law to determine that the proposed terminal or export would be in the public interest.⁵⁶ US environmental law also requires both regulators to consider the environmental impacts of an LNG project.⁵⁷ But currently, neither FERC nor DOE quantify the GHG emissions associated with proposed LNG projects or exports, or take into account those emissions when considering the public interest.⁵⁸

A Trump-era rule eliminated environmental impact assessment on exports. In one of the Trump administration's final deregulatory moves in December 2020, DOE finalized a rule that categorically excludes environmental and climate considerations from export permit decisions.⁵⁹ This means that applications to export gas are likely to be rubberstamped and deemed to be in the public interest. Disappointingly, the Biden administration has not signaled any willingness to reverse this rule, in contrast to many of the other Trump-era anti-environmental policies that are in the process of being rewritten. Early in the Biden administration, when the White House and DOE issued their respective lists of policy actions of the Trump administration that would be revisited, this rule was left out.⁶⁰ What's worse, since Biden became president, DOE has applied this rule on at least two occasions to approve LNG exports without conducting any environmental impact analysis.⁶¹

FERC has been “unable to determine the significance” of projects’ climate impacts. In the past, FERC's analysis of the environmental impacts of each proposed gas export project has failed to incorporate lifecycle GHG emissions on the grounds that this is simply too uncertain.⁶² This approach is wrong and outdated, and it may no longer be tenable, in the face of successful legal challenges by Sierra Club and others.⁶³

2. US officials creating new markets for gas overseas

abroad, creating new demand and new markets for US LNG exports, and needlessly locking countries into decades of fossil fuel energy and GHG emissions, as discussed in Part II above. These deals are often propped up by public export finance subsidies for fossil fuel projects abroad or accompanied by US military assistance (as was the case in Poland, see box case study below). This support can come from across different parts of the administration, with Departments of State and Energy typically playing a leading role, along with trade assistance from the US Trade and Development Agency.

Energy diplomacy in the Department of State. Energy considerations have always been an important factor in US foreign policy, but as the domestic fracking boom was taking off, this took on a new form. The State Department embraced the role of ambassador for the US fossil fuel industry that was eager to find new markets abroad. The State Department's ambitions in this area evolved and grew over time, from helping other countries to develop their own shale gas potential in early years, to promoting US gas exports abroad more recently.

The initial effort, the “Global Shale Gas Initiative”, was launched in 2010 under Secretary Hilary Clinton at a meeting of the industry group United States Energy Association – whose member companies were pursuing fracking overseas. Its goal was to help other countries develop their own shale gas potential.⁶⁴

In 2011, the initiative became a core part of the State Department's new well-staffed Bureau of Energy Resources, which continued to operate under Trump and now operates under the Biden administration.⁶⁵ Under Trump, this unit in the State Department sought to promote US gas exports abroad, including in Europe. Bloomberg reported that in 2018, “Trump and U.S. State Department officials have spent months

promoting U.S. LNG exports in Europe, raising concerns that the continent faces security risks from drawing more Russian supplies.”⁶⁶ The recent State Department appointment of former LNG executive Amos Hochstein as a Senior Advisor for Energy Security suggests a likely continuation of this policy under Biden.⁶⁷

Department of Energy’s “freedom gas.” As the Trump administration trumpeted a rhetoric of US “energy dominance”, senior officials at DOE sought to rebrand US LNG as “freedom gas” and “molecules of freedom.”⁶⁸ Trump’s Secretary of Energy Rick Perry was particularly active in promoting US LNG exports to Europe: in September 2018 he announced the Partnership for Transatlantic Energy Cooperation, which emphasized LNG infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe.⁶⁹ In May 2019, Perry attended the EU High Level Energy Forum in Brussels along with EU officials and companies, visiting a local LNG import terminal and discussing imports.⁷⁰

There are troubling indications that senior DOE officials under Biden see their role in much the same light. The current Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at DOE, Andrew Light, told the Senate during his confirmation hearing: “My job in this role is to make sure U.S. gas is competitive around the world” – to evident applause from oil industry lobby group American Petroleum Institute.⁷¹

US Trade and Development Agency. In 2017, the Trump administration teamed up with the US Chamber of Commerce, a powerful business lobby group, to launch a public-private partnership called the “US Gas Infrastructure Exports Initiative” under the auspices of a small government agency, the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA).⁷² According to the USTDA website, it has supported 300 projects in over 70 countries, which has generated \$7.5 billion in US gas sector exports.⁷³ The agency connects US gas companies with overseas partners and offers government financing of feasibility studies and other early stage project

preparation.⁷⁴ Details are remarkably opaque – it declined to provide information on gas projects it funds to an investigative reporter from the Center for Public Integrity who covered it in 2018.⁷⁵ It is unclear whether the Biden administration is continuing this program, as the webpage is currently inactive.⁷⁶



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CASE STUDY: US GOVERNMENT PUSH FOR US LNG IN POLAND

President Trump made US gas export to Poland a foreign policy priority. He repeatedly raised this issue during a July 2017 trip to Poland,⁷⁷ and again during a July 2018 meeting with Jean-Claude Juncker, who was the President of the European Commission at the time.⁷⁸

In the following months, Poland’s main gas company, the Polish Oil and Gas Company (PGNiG), signed deals with at least three different US companies that lock them into large LNG purchases for decades.⁷⁹ At the time, these deals were likely key to funding the construction of two new US LNG export terminals: Plaquemines LNG and Port Arthur LNG, where PGNiG was either the only confirmed buyer, or one of two confirmed buyers.⁸⁰

One of these gas deals was signed in November 2018, at a ceremony in Warsaw attended by US Energy Secretary Perry and Polish President Andrzej Duda.⁸¹ At the same time, Perry also signed an Energy Declaration with Polish energy officials that promoted the importance of Świnoujście expansion.⁸² The first gas shipment

under this deal reportedly arrived in July 2019.⁸³

When Trump met with Polish President Duda in Washington DC in June 2019, once again, US LNG was a major topic of discussion. During the same summit, another LNG deal was signed, overseen by Perry.⁸⁴ The US subsequently approved the sale of 32 new F-35 fighter jets and a multibillion-dollar missile system to Poland.⁸⁵

PART IV: THE SOLUTION – END US SUPPORT FOR GAS EXPORTS AND BUILD BACK FOSSIL FREE

Unless President Biden changes course, the US is on track to become the world's top exporter of climate-wrecking LNG by 2023. If he is serious about the global fight against the climate crisis, he must lead by example and take an opportunity to turn a new leaf, away from the pro-gas policies of the Trump administration. The Biden administration has the ability to change course and take the following actions, even without needing to pass bills in a highly divided Congress:

1. Phase out gas exports.

A number of different government departments in the Biden administration have the ability to end the gas export boom and associated infrastructure buildout:

The US Department of Energy should phase out its gas export approvals. It can do this by incorporating environmental impacts including lifecycle GHG emissions in its analysis of public interest and rejecting gas exports that are not in the public interest. As described above, this is currently prevented by a Trump-era rule that DOE should promptly rescind.

> **FERC should stop approving gas export infrastructure projects**, by better taking into account their climate and environmental justice impacts, as required by a recent federal court decision.⁸⁶ One way to do this would be by incorporating “social cost of carbon” into its environmental reviews as the US

Environmental Protection Agency has called on FERC to do.⁸⁷ A full accounting of climate and environmental injustices caused by gas export projects should lead to the conclusion that they must be rejected as not being in the public interest.

> **The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) should address the hazards of LNG** by strengthening gas safety regulations.

> **President Biden could declare a climate emergency.** Such a declaration would allow him to direct DOE to conduct a fact-finding to conclude that gas exports are generally not in the public interest, due to their climate and environmental harms. In January 2021, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called on the President to declare a national climate emergency alongside a growing chorus of Members of Congress supporting the National Climate Emergency Act of 2021.⁸⁸

2. Build Back Fossil Free at home and abroad.

President Biden ran under the campaign slogan of “Build Back Better” and that must mean building back fossil-free at home, in its foreign policy and international financing. This must also mean ensuring environmental justice for Black, Indigenous and other marginalized communities that suffer disproportionate harms from the US gas industry. He must also ensure a just transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry, ensuring that as the US moves away from gas exports support, training and new jobs are created to ensure all workers continue to have decent work and well-paid jobs. The Build Back Fossil Free movement, of which Global Witness is a member, is calling on President Biden to live up to his promises by using executive authority to stop approving fossil fuel projects fuelling climate chaos and to declare a climate emergency as a pathway for delivering jobs, justice and clean energy for all.⁸⁹ It also means encouraging other countries to build back fossil free and promote fossil-free energy alternatives.

3. End diplomatic support for US gas deals abroad.

If President Biden is serious about being a climate leader and setting an example for the rest of the world, then the US must stop using its considerable geopolitical influence to foist gas on the rest of the world. Instead, he must redirect US energy diplomacy within the Department of State and Department of Energy towards curbing and replacing gas with climate-friendly renewable alternatives.

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