

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2024

Mr. Chris Wright
Nominee for U.S. Secretary of Energy
138 Conant Street, Suite 401
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Mr. Wright,

It is our hope that the incoming Trump administration and DOE under your leadership will return to regular order when it comes to the review of LNG export permits and take into account the full record of U.S. LNG, including the benefits of increased exports when conducting public interest reviews. We also respectfully request that DOE provide full transparency on any previously conducted LNG studies and their findings to ensure Congress and the public have the full record available.

On January 26, 2024, the Biden administration announced it was implementing a temporary “pause” in its review of liquefied natural gas (LNG) export permits to non-free trade agreement countries while the Department of Energy (DOE) undertook a new study to update the environmental and economic analyses that inform DOE’s determination on whether such applications are in the public interest.¹ DOE officials followed through with their public statements by releasing the study in mid-December, in the waning days of the Biden-Harris Administration. This study, requiring a 60-day comment period, purposefully extends into President Trump’s term, limiting your ability to shape America First energy policies.

Last week, the Biden administration again delayed two projects: Commonwealth LNG, which has been pending authorization for over two years, and Venture Global LNG CP2 projects.² DOE initiated this pause at the start of an election year, reportedly at the behest of environmental groups and climate activists.³ Further, there are reports that an LNG study may have already been completed in 2023 and that DOE failed to share this critical information with Congress and the public and instead moved forward with the pause.⁴ During a House Committee on Oversight and Accountability hearing on December 4, 2024, Brad Crabtree, Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management (FECM), stated, “[They] began work on the update in the timeframe [January 1, 2023 and October 31, 2023] largely that you stated.”

It is clear the Biden administration’s pause and final LNG study are politically motivated. It is concerning that this administration appears to be rushing to finalize the study before January 20, 2025, forcing the public and stakeholders to review and comment on a lengthy and complex study over a busy holiday period to jam the new administration.

¹ Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management, *The Temporary Pause on Review of Pending Applications to Export Liquefied Natural Gas*, Dept. of Energy (2024), <https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/The%20Temporary%20Pause%20on%20Review%20of%20Pending%20Applications%20to%20Export%20Liquefied%20Natural%20Gas.pdf>.

² <https://www.eenews.net/articles/doe-delays-approvals-for-2-major-lng-projects/>

³ Benoit Morenne and Andrew Restuccia, How the Rockefellers and Billionaire Donors Pressured Biden on LNG Exports, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 8, 2024). See NRDC, Morgan Johnson, DOE Puts People First: LNG Exports Paused Pending Review (Jan. 31, 2024).

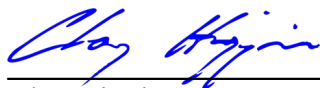
⁴ Gov’t Accountability and Oversight, *Yes, Louisiana, there is a Scandal- “Pause,”* (Sept. 23, 2024), available at <https://govoversight.org/yes-louisiana-there-is-a-scandal-pause/>.

The economic, environmental, and national security benefits of U.S. LNG are well established. According to a recent study, the U.S. LNG industry has created \$44 billion in economic activity, supported over 222,000 jobs, and provided \$23 billion in labor income.⁵ Since the beginning of the LNG industry, U.S. natural gas production has surpassed LNG exports three-fold, and natural gas prices have averaged 37% lower than in the previous decade.⁶ Americans have some of the lowest residential natural gas prices in the world, even as global gas demand is projected to reach all-time highs in the coming years.⁷ Further, U.S. LNG exports have helped lower carbon dioxide emissions through coal-to-gas switching.⁸

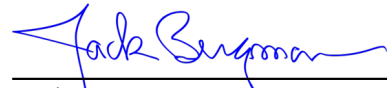
The benefits of U.S. LNG exports have always been clear, and it is troubling that the Biden administration continues to implement a politically driven pause on LNG export permits. When you lead DOE under the incoming Trump administration, the LNG pause must be lifted immediately, and DOE must return to the regular review of LNG export permits. We should ensure LNG export permit reviews utilize nonpoliticized information and remove the uncertainty in the process to keep U.S. LNG competitive in the global energy trade. We also ask DOE to provide Congress and the public full transparency on all forthcoming and previously completed studies and decisions concerning LNG exports.

We look forward to working with you on these matters and protecting energy security in the U.S. and for our allies abroad.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



Aaron Bean
Member of Congress

⁵ PWC, *Quantifying America's Economic and Energy Opportunity through LNG Exports*, (October 2024), <https://nam.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Quantifying-Americas-Economic-and-Energy-Opportunity-through-LNG-Exports.pdf>

⁶ EIA, *Natural gas explained - Natural gas imports and exports*, (Jun. 30, 2024), <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/natural-gas/imports-and-exports.php#:~:text=Increases%20in%20U.S.%20natural%20gas%20production%20have%20helped%20to%20increase.exporter%20from%202017%20through%202022; see also: https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/rngc1a.htm>.

⁷ EVA, *Impact Analysis of U.S. Natural Gas Exports on Domestic Natural Gas Pricing*, (March 2024), <https://www.evainc.com/press-releases/eva-us-lng-export-industry/>; IEA, *Global Gas Security Review 2024*, (October 2024), <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/fa115714-f9f8-4727-8520-5e8b5ca265ad/GlobalGasSecurityReview2024.pdf>

⁸ IEA, *The changing landscape of global emissions*, (March 2024), <https://www.iea.org/reports/co2-emissions-in-2023/the-changing-landscape-of-global-emissions>



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