

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security
Member Lizzie Fletcher

Hearing on “Biden’s LNG Export Ban: How Rush-to-green Politics Hurts Local Communities and U.S. Energy Security”

April 8, 2024

Today’s hearing is an important opportunity to learn about LNG exports and the role that LNG plays in our country’s present and future—from our local communities to the global community—and the opportunities and challenges that are before us today.

I thank Mr. Weber for hosting us in his district today, and I thank Chairman Duncan for bringing us here to see and hear more about this important topic. Today has been a collaborative and useful one, and I look forward to today’s hearing and the opportunity for us all to learn more. I am sure there will be many areas of agreement and beneficial ideas for action.

I do, however, want to note at my disagreement with the title of this hearing. January’s announcement from the Biden Administration is not an export ban. LNG exports continue—and will continue—each day. The administration announced a temporary pause on the approval of exports permits at the Department of Energy while it reviews and updates its public interest-determination process. Facilities with existing permits will continue to operate and fill orders. That includes facilities that are under construction, and several that have not even begun construction. Proposed projects, which go through a multistep process, will continue to advance through FERC for the siting, construction, and operation of facilities.

And it is with that in mind that I think today’s hearing can and should be instructive. The Department of Energy’s determination of public interest has until today evaluated environmental impacts and cost impacts for consumers. DOE last updated its environmental and cost analyses more than five years ago, when LNG exports were less than half of what they were last year. It is not unreasonable for the DOE to take an objective look at export applications with the most comprehensive, up-to-date analysis of the economic, environmental, and national security considerations of public interest. It is not the same thing as a ban on exports.

That said, I know that the pause has caused concern and uncertainty for people and projects, for companies and communities. So, our hearing today is an important opportunity for us to participate in the process and fact-gathering. This field hearing is an opportunity to address the principal issue areas that have been raised as concerns with LNG (1) climate, (2) cost, and (3) communities, with a particular emphasis on communities.

Multiple administrations of both parties have found, that exporting LNG is in the public interest. Cleaner American natural gas is more competitive on the world market and is an important tool in

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addressing climate change. But that does not mean that our work to reduce emissions and safeguard communities is complete. Communities neighboring facilities need to be confident that their needs and concerns are addressed in the planning process.

It was only 2016 that the first LNG export terminal in the lower 48 states began exporting natural gas. Since then—in just eight years—the United States has become the world’s top exporter of natural gas. The growth that we have seen from the shale revolution has powered our economy and increased our national security.