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Biden Urged to Keep LNG Exports Flowing to Help Kill Off Coal



Natural gas producers and pipeline companies are warning the Biden administration against any move to pause US liquefied natural gas export approvals, saying it would squander the climate benefits of replacing dirtier coal-fired power worldwide.

“US LNG is the single most powerful tool the world has to reduce global emissions by displacing coal use around the globe,” the Partnership to Address Global Emissions said Friday in a letter to Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and other top administration officials. By ramping up LNG exports this decade — instead of pushing the pause button — the US could go far “in meeting our parallel goals of displacing global coal” while also “shoring up the energy security of our allies.”

The warning comes as the Biden administration considers changes in how it determines whether additional LNG exports are in the “national interest” — a legal test for licenses to ship LNG to countries that aren’t US free-trade partners. Administration officials are

weighing greater scrutiny of the greenhouse gas emissions and climate consequences of additional exports, a review that could slow or even freeze the Energy Department's issuance of new licenses.

The PAGE coalition, which includes gas producer EQT Corp. as well as pipeline operators Enbridge Inc., Williams Cos. and TC Energy Corp., was formed to advocate policies that support the use of natural gas as a climate solution. Natural gas burns more cleanly than coal, producing about half as many carbon dioxide emissions when used to generate electricity. But environmentalists have warned that methane leaks from wells, pipelines and processing risk undermining those green credentials and that the construction of new, expensive gas infrastructure could lock in its use for decades longer, discouraging emission-free alternatives.

The US and nearly 200 other nations agreed to transition away from fossil fuels at the end of United Nations climate negotiations in December. But that pact also acknowledged that "transitional fuels can play a role in facilitating the energy transition while ensuring energy security.