

# [***Biden administration to pause proposed natural gas export projects until federal review is complete***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B65-DM51-JBSS-S008-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Washington (CNN) &#8212; The Biden administration will pause federal approval [*for several pending liquified natural gas export projects*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/24/politics/biden-natural-gas-export-cp2-louisiana-climate/index.html) as it undertakes a broad review of the massive increase in US exports to foreign nations, administration officials announced Friday - roiling the US gas industry and handing a temporary victory to climate groups.

US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and White House National Climate Adviser Ali Zaidi said the recent boom in US liquified natural gas exports, especially to Europe following [*Russia's war in Ukraine*](https://www.cnn.com/world/europe/ukraine), prompted the need for a thorough analysis of the entire industry in the US - which hasn't been done since 2018.

"The pause will not affect already authorized exports, nor will it impact our ability to supply our allies in Europe, Asia, or other recipients of already authorized exports," Granholm told reporters.

The US is the world's largest exporter of natural gas; new liquified natural gas projects that are currently under construction here would triple the nation's current export capacity, Granholm said. Granholm and Zaidi said the review would, among other things, examine whether US producers are sending too much natural gas overseas instead of using it at home to help power the electric grid.

In a statement, President Joe Biden tied the pause to the climate crisis, which is drastically raising global temperatures and fueling extreme weather.

"This pause on new LNG approvals sees the climate crisis for what it is: the existential threat of our time," Biden said. "During this period, we will take a hard look at the impacts of LNG exports on energy costs, America's energy security, and our environment. While MAGA Republicans willfully deny the urgency of the climate crisis, condemning the American people to a dangerous future, my Administration will not be complacent. We will not cede to special interests."

Natural gas is big business for the US fossil fuel industry, which has recently been exporting much of the product to other countries, particularly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Europe's subsequent move away from Russian gas. US companies have stepped in to fill that gap, compressing or freezing gas at export terminals and shipping it across the ocean in enormous tankers.

The review will also look at the climate implications of fracking and shipping billions of cubic feet of natural gas overseas, Zaidi said. The planet-warming superpollutant methane is the main ingredient of natural gas, and the Biden administration has taken several actions to try to crack down on methane leaks as part of its climate agenda.

"We take this action in a context where the United States has been an unwavering partner to our allies in Europe who, by the way, are our partner in calling for a transition away from fossil fuels," Zaidi told reporters.

Sixty members of the European Parliament said Thursday that Europe did not need a hike in LNG from the US and said Europe was being used as an excuse for more drilling.

"We are concerned that a false depiction of European energy needs is now being used as an excuse by the fossil fuel industry and their allies to dramatically expand US LNG exports to the global market," the lawmakers said in a letter Thursday addressed to Biden and Granholm.

The Europe lawmakers acknowledged natural gas from the US had been helpful in weaning off Russian gas. But the continent's consumption of natural gas is already being met, they said.

"Even with current demand, the European LNG import infrastructure has been used at only 60% in 2023, suggesting that there is likely no infrastructure bottleneck impeding more US LNG from reaching EU markets, and that an LNG facility build-out in the US would be even less needed."

Senior administration officials said the pause on four pending projects in front of the Department of Energy would take several months as federal scientists and experts do their analysis. The analysis will then undergo a public comment period, officials said.

And senior administration officials said the pause on pending projects wouldn't yet impact CP2, the largest proposed gas export project to date in the US, which could ultimately export up to 20 million tons of natural gas a year. CP2 is still pending final approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, after which it would head to the Energy Department. However, CP2 development could effectively be paused if FERC approves it while the Energy Department review is ongoing.

Eight other LNG projects that the Biden administration has already approved won't be impacted by the pause.

Fossil fuel industry groups decried the administration's decision.

"This is nothing more than a broken promise to US allies, and it's time for the administration to stop playing ***politics*** with global energy security," American Petroleum Institute president and CEO Mike Sommers said in a statement.

Climate and environmental justice advocates on the Gulf Coast, meanwhile, celebrated it as a major victory and vowed to continue fighting new LNG projects.

"They made a monumental decision in this fight for climate justice," said Roishetta Ozane, the founder of Vessel Project of Louisiana, a mutual aid organization. She added that Biden's decision "sets the stage for potential rejections and slows down the progress of these projects."

Ozane is a resident of Sulphur, Louisiana - a town near several major LNG terminals. "Living in a community that smells like rotten eggs and chemicals, I know that these facilities are not in the public interest," she said.

By Ella Nilsen, CNN

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