

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2024

The Honorable Jose W. Fernandez
Under Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Under Secretary Fernandez:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the recent decision by the White House to implement a temporary pause on the pending approvals of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports. This decision, as outlined in the administration's fact sheet dated January 26, 2024, has prompted significant concern across the energy sector, as well as among international partners relying on the United States for LNG supplies.¹

The rationale behind this pause, as stated, is to assess the environmental impacts and align the export policy with broader national security and climate objectives. However, this move has raised questions regarding its implications for U.S. foreign policy, energy security, and the legal and regulatory framework governing LNG exports. Critics, including major energy trade associations and policymakers, argue that this decision could undermine the United States' position as a reliable energy supplier, affect international energy markets, and potentially strain relations with key allies and trading partners.²

Ahead of your appearance before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 21st, we would appreciate answers to the following questions:

- (1) What specific factors prompted the Biden Administration to initiate this temporary pause on LNG export approvals, and how does this decision align with the United States' long-term energy and foreign policy goals?
- (2) How does the Department of State plan to engage with international partners³ and allies⁴ to address their concerns and ensure that this pause does not adversely affect U.S. relationships and commitments abroad or cause them to turn to other countries?

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/01/26/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-temporary-pause-on-pending-approvals-of-liquefied-natural-gas-exports/>

² <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-pausing-lng-exports-bad-foreign-policy>


³ <https://igu.org/news/halt-of-key-us-lng-export-projects-review-sends-an-unsettling-signal-to-global-energy-markets/>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/japan-worried-us-pause-lng-export-approvals-may-delay-new-projects-2024-01-30/>

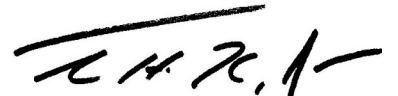
- (3) What measures are being considered to mitigate potential negative impacts on American jobs, the domestic energy industry, and the broader economy, particularly in terms of energy trade associations challenging the legality of this decision?⁵
- (4) Can the Department provide an assessment of the expected duration of this pause and the criteria that will be used to determine when and how to resume LNG export approvals?

We look forward to your response and your testimony before the committee.

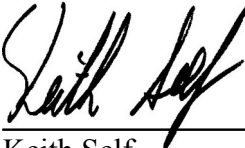
Sincerely,



John James
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Keith Self
Member of Congress

⁵ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-25/qatar-to-accelerate-lng-expansion-as-us-stalls-on-export-push>