PRESS RELEASE

Report: Heatmap shows Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) expansion in globally-important marine biodiversity hotspots

New LNG developments lock in fossil fuels and threaten fisheries, human health, ecosystems, and the global climate

Available in: Português

Sacramento, USA (June 6, 2024) — New maps and analysis from research organization Earth Insight and partners — released ahead of World Oceans Day on June 8, 2024 — paint a sobering picture of current plans to expand Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) infrastructure worldwide, posing threats to the global climate as well as significant hubs for biodiversity.

READ THE REPORT — Anything But Natural: Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) Infrastructure Expansion Threats to Coastal & Marine Ecosystems

LNG is mostly composed of methane gas. If cooled, the gas becomes liquid and can be stored and transported by sea using special tankers. When methane is burned to obtain energy, it produces less carbon dioxide than other fossil fuels, such as oil or gas. However, methane itself
is in itself a potent greenhouse gas, responsible for almost a third of all global warming we are experiencing today. The cost of developing planned natural gas infrastructure exceeds one trillion dollars, and will increase by threefold the world’s export capacity, and by two-thirds its import capacity. United States, Russia, China, Mexico, and Canada are leading the pack in planned LNG infrastructure expansion, while countries like the Philippines, Mozambique, and Brazil also feature in the top 20.

Case studies and regional maps in the report show:

- In the United States, developments along the Gulf Coast will disproportionately impact communities of color in some of the poorer states of the country. These communities already experience poor air quality from operating LNG facilities and regularly suffer downpours and floods caused by climate change-fueled hurricanes and storms;
- In Mexico’s Baja California state, new LNG infrastructure threatens “the world’s aquarium,” home to 40% of all marine mammals in the world and many endangered species. If current plans go ahead, eight new terminals will be built in a region that is a whale sanctuary and is listed as a UNESCO World heritage site;
- In the Philippines, building new LNG terminals will add more pressure to the Verde Island Passage, one of the world’s most biodiverse marine places. The region, often called “the Amazon of the Oceans,” is already one of the world’s busiest marine routes and was hit by an oil spill in 2023 with devastating consequences;
- In Mozambique and East Africa, gas developments have already caused the forced displacement of local communities and new plans threaten several critically endangered marine species. The offshore expansion will take place along a coastline full of mangroves and coral reefs;
- and, in Brazil, there are plans to build new LNG terminals along the Atlantic coast, a region that is already cluttered with oil and gas infrastructure. Whale populations will be particularly affected, as the new developments overlap with their breeding grounds and migration routes.

The last 10 years have been the ocean’s warmest since at least the 1800s, with 2023 being the hottest ever recorded. Destructive marine heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense across the world. Massive coral bleaching episodes are destroying reefs and all the natural life they support. And species are being displaced from their habitats, moving to cooler and deeper waters, disrupting ecological chains and impacting fisheries.

New LNG facilities will increase shipping intensity and noise pollution in marine migration corridors, mating and nursery areas for species like whales and dolphins, and important fishing grounds.

The report, launched just before World Oceans Day 2024, follows the 2024 United Nations Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, Spain (April 8-12, 2024) and the 9th Our Ocean Conference in Athens, Greece (April 16-17, 2024), a series of events first launched under the initiative of then-U.S. Department of State and the Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014. It also
follows an historic May 2024 ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea dictating that emissions from fossil fuels — and other planet-warming gasses that are absorbed by the oceans — count as marine pollution; a first climate-related ruling from that body.

**Maps**

Look at the interactive heatmap [here](#).
Download static maps from the report [here](#).
Supplied underwater images of marine life (credit Lynsey Grosfield/Earth Insight) [here](#).

**Quotes and Interview Opportunities**

“Investing in LNG infrastructure — especially in some of the world’s most important nurseries of marine life — just doesn’t make any sense. At this point in the energy transition and nature crisis, it’s a one way ticket to stranded assets and won’t help us solve the climate crisis.”

Tyson Miller, Executive Director, Earth Insight: +1 (828) 279-2343, [tyson@earth-insight.org](mailto:tyson@earth-insight.org)

“The new report ‘Anything But Natural: Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Infrastructure Expansion Threats to Coastal & Marine Ecosystems’ reveals the stark reality that LNG — often touted as a cleaner marine fuel — is far from the panacea it’s made out to be. Through strategic maps and data, we expose how LNG's lifecycle — from extraction on land to combustion at sea — inflicts severe damage on our planet's most vulnerable ecosystems and communities. By championing a lifecycle approach, we shed light on false solutions that cultivate crises on land and amplify environmental and social injustices. It's time to navigate away from the illusion of LNG as a benign alternative and steer towards genuine marine solutions that do not compromise the health of our planet and its people.”

Elissama Menezes, Global Director, Say No to LNG [director@saynotolng.org](mailto:director@saynotolng.org)

“Maps can be powerful tools for understanding landscapes where there are a lot of competing needs. Our work in this report combines LNG data and biodiversity data, and it's clear to see that for many of these projects, the risks to people and nature cross an unacceptable threshold. As a scientist I believe we need to really consider all the data and risks before investing in long-term fossil infrastructure in biodiversity hotspots that sustain all our lives. Creating transparency in the threats these developments pose is critical.”

Bart Wickel, Research Director, Earth Insight, [bart@earth-insight.org](mailto:bart@earth-insight.org)

**Mozambique:** “It is obvious that the impacts of gas projects are not neatly contained within the formal project boundaries. The damage to seagrass beds, mangroves and coral reefs will impact on the success of many valuable species, including whales and dolphins, turtles, dugongs, and marine species that are important food sources for coastal communities. These systems are also valuable protection against severe weather events, which are noticeably more
frequent and destructive. Already, land grabs and forced displacement of communities for gas development have worsened local socio-economic conditions, contributed to disenfranchisement of the youth, and thus contributed to fuelling the violent insurgency in the region.”

Anabela Lemos, Justiça Ambiental! / Friends of the Earth Mozambique, anabela.ja.mz@gmail.com / stopmozgas@gmail.com

Brazil: “The report provides important data for managing the just energy transition in Brazil, highlighting areas where the LNG sector is rapidly developing. Additionally, this growth near the Abrolhos Land and Sea Territory, one of the main hotspots in the country for the preservation of the Atlantic Forest and the biggest coral reef bank in Brazil, is a cause for concern.”

Vinicius Nora, Gerente de Oceanos e Clima, vinicius.nora@arayara.org

Philippines: "LNG expansion is a major threat for the climate, biodiversity, and communities. In the Philippines, a buildout of LNG terminals and power plants threatens the Verde Island Passage - one of the most biodiverse marine ecosystems in the world. For a country that has so much renewable energy it could instead be developing, LNG is an unnecessary and detrimental distraction that only exacerbates our climate vulnerabilities. We need to be advancing real climate solutions and biodiversity protection, and not locking in more fossil fuel expansion."

Gerry Arances, Executive Director of the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) and Co-Convenor of Protect Verde Island Passage. media@ceedphilippines.com | www.protectvip.org

US Gulf South: (Available for Interviews) John Beard Jr, CEO, Port Arthur Community Action Network (PACAN), pacanportarthur@gmail.com

Additional Resources

- Losing Ground: Fossil Fuel Extraction Threatens Protected Areas Around the World (Earth Insight, LINGO, and the IUCN-WCPA)
- LNG, Shipping, and the Amazon of the Oceans: Scoping Key Issues and Potential Impacts of the Massive Expansion of LNG in the Verde Island Passage (CEED Philippines)
- Amazon Fossil-Free Monitor (Arayara & Climate Observatory)
- [Infographic] From land to sea: LNG impacts people, nature and the economy (Say No to LNG)
- [Press Release] The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Gaslight of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) (Say no to LNG)
- [Podcast] ship.energy podcast on the health connection of LNG shipping (Say No to LNG and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE))
- [Infographic] LNG does not belong in green corridors
- LNG WEB SERIES (Arayara & Say No To LNG)
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjP_vdypoljZfG_CINpmMvRCyKJ6rJACM&si=9Oo0CjzdSW94qypU

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About Earth Insight

Earth Insight is a research and capacity building initiative that is a sponsored project of the Resources Legacy Fund, based in Sacramento, California. Staff and partners span the globe and represent a unique grouping of individuals and organizations with diverse backgrounds in mapping and spatial analysis, communications, and policy. Earth Insight is committed to advancing new tools, awareness, and momentum for protecting critical places and supporting civil society and indigenous and local communities in this effort.

www.earth-insight.org

About Say No to LNG

Say No To LNG is a global shipping campaign debunking the myth that Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is a “climate friendly” marine fuel alternative and mobilizing stakeholders towards a fossil fuel-free shipping industry. We are a collective of subject matter experts and environmental advocates from across the world who collaborate to push back on the adoption of LNG as a marine fuel and educate key actors on its role in worsening global warming, financial losses, human rights issues, and public health.

www.saynotolng.org