

WE'RE NOT THERE YET

BUT A GAS PROJECT  
IS GETTING CLOSER

Commonwealth North Energy Action Coalition – Jan. 23, 2015

*Presentation by Larry Persily, Federal Coordinator for Alaska Gas Line Projects*

# FERC efforts during 2015

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- FERC expects project sponsors to submit first draft environmental resource reports next month
- FERC to issue formal Notice of Intent for an EIS as required by National Environmental Policy Act
- Contractor on board to assist with EIS
- FERC will lead workshops in Alaska for federal agencies participating in EIS process
- Public ‘scoping’ meetings will be held statewide

# It all leads to an EIS

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- Single FERC-led EIS for all federal agencies
- FERC requires that LNG project applicants submit 13 “Resource Reports” when they turn in their full application for approval to construct and operate
- Reports will form basis for environmental impact statement; data gathering starts during pre-file
- FERC and other federal agencies will review drafts, request more information from applicant as needed

# Export authorization status

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- Exports to free-trade nations approved Dec. 21
- Exports to non-free-trade nations pending
- Just one challenge filed with Energy Department
- All other comments were supportive
- Energy Secretary in October said the department would decide Alaska as ‘expeditiously as possible’
- Export approval will be conditional on FERC EIS

# It's different for Alaska

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- New Energy Department policy Lower 48 only
- No more first-come, first-served application review
- Energy now requires applicants to finish EIS and obtain FERC approval before export decision
- Eliminates works on projects unlikely to proceed
- Energy Secretary: “We are very explicit this is a completely separate evaluation” for Alaska LNG

# Federal Coordinator shutdown

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- No funding in FY15 budget; shutdown March 1
- Congress did not expand agency's 2004 authority to allow coordinating work on LNG export project
- Agency will preserve reports and research under 'The Pipe Files' digital library at ARLIS / UAA
- Discussions under way with federal officials to possibly find new home for information services
- The need to share information does not disappear

# Make-or-break factors for Alaska

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- Global economic growth, LNG market demand
- Japan, China, Europe, Middle East, South America
- Price and politics of burning gas instead of coal
- If LNG demand fails to meet expectations, investors will build fewer new LNG export plants
- Whether Alaska wins? It's project cost and price
- Alaskans should not expect oil wealth from LNG

# It's all about risk and price

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- Dozens of proposed, potential, possible projects are making pitches to the same buyers as Alaska
- No global shortage of gas
- Project cost and price rules in competitive market
- But certainty, dependability have value, too
- Reducing risks for buyers and investors is crucial
- No LNG project has lost money long-term, but some will earn a lot less profit than sponsors had planned

# What are the odds for Alaska

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- Best it's been in 40 years
- The timing this time is good for Alaska
- Natural gas increasingly the fuel of choice
- LNG demand growing, just a question of how much
- Turning North Slope gas into cash would extend life of oil operations — crucial for Alaska's future
- By 2020s and beyond, gas sales could begin without ruining North Slope oil production numbers

# Staying on schedule

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- Draft resource reports to FERC early 2015
- Pre-FEED field work summer 2015
- FEED decision early 2016
- Full application to FERC summer 2016
- Draft EIS 2017; final EIS 2018; FID 2019
- Each decision point is about partners agreeing to spend increasingly larger amounts of money

# Alaska's competition: Canada

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- High costs make it hard to sign up customers
- Petronas delayed FID, saying it needs to cut costs
- None of the 18 projects have gone to FID
- First Nations negotiations taking more time
- Environmental issues for coastal LNG plants
- Project sponsors pushed for lower taxes in B.C.; now seek faster depreciation on federal taxes

# Competition: U.S. Gulf Coast

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- First project to start up end of 2015; two more under construction on Gulf and one on East Coast
- All others are waiting for permits and FID
- Industry will not want to risk cost overruns from building too many projects all at the same time
- All are 'tolling model' projects, where plant owners don't take gas price risk — they're paid regardless
- Likely a lot of the LNG could stay in Atlantic Basin

# Competition: Russia

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- Yamal LNG under development, but under duress
- Western sanctions over Ukraine hinder financing
- Russian government helps from 'Wellbeing Fund'
- Russia is building port, airport and icebreakers
- Chinese has offered financing, but no bargain rate
- Sanctions block technology, equipment, expertise
- Many expect Yamal will miss 2018 start-up target

# Global pricing debate

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- Asian buyers, led by Japan, have been pushing to delink LNG pricing from oil since at least 2012
- High oil prices, growing LNG demand, lack of new supply pushed prices to \$17 - \$20 per million Btu
- That was then, this is now: \$10 per million Btu
- New supply coming online; demand growth softens
- And plummeting oil price makes LNG cheaper
- Buyers signing shorter contracts until market settles

# Future pricing unknown

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- Lower prices will lessen push for new price formula
- But most LNG still will be sold on long-term deals
- Today's price is not the deciding factor for Alaska
- Price and contract terms for 2020 and beyond will determine success or failure of Alaska gas project
- Alaska has to compete at future prices, not today's
- Terms will vary as buyers seek diversified portfolio

# For more information

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Office of the Federal Coordinator  
for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects

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