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Testimony of Thomas D Schuster
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To the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

On Sierra Club's concerns related to exporting fracked gas as LNG

On behalf of our more than 30,000 members in Pennsylvania, I write to express grave concerns with any attempt to increase exports of fracked gas to international markets. Such exports would 1) exacerbate climate change, 2) drive up energy prices domestically, and 3) increase local air and water pollution and cause safety hazards in communities that are already overburdened. Moreover, it is unlikely that an increase in gas exports from the US would alleviate energy shortages in Europe that have arisen due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin's criminal invasion of Ukraine is a humanitarian disaster, and we must do everything we can to minimize the death, destruction, and suffering by undermining his dictatorial regime and bringing an end to the war. Putin is once again using his country's oil and gas exports as a weapon - withholding them from countries that support Ukraine's self-defense. While it may seem reasonable to attempt to replace Russian gas with American LNG, it is not feasible and would have significant negative consequences.

Although the European Commission has asked for additional gas deliveries *this year*, Europe does not need additional gas in the medium or long term. The International Energy Agency has concluded that heat pumps, building efficiency, and similar measures can significantly reduce the European Union's gas use, and thus reliance on Russian energy, this year, with greater reductions each following year.¹ Similarly, the United Kingdom's Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit has concluded that all of the United Kingdom's gas demand that was recently met by Russian gas could be eliminated through installation of heat pumps and better insulation within five years.²

¹ International Energy Agency, A 10-Point Plan to Reduce the European Union's Reliance on Russian Natural Gas (March 3, 2022), available at <https://www.iea.org/reports/a-10-point-plan-to-reduce-the-european-unions-reliance-on-russian-natural-gas>

² Harry Cockburn, Heat Pumps and Insulation 'Fastest Way to End Reliance on Russian Gas,' the Independent, March 9, 2022, available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/climatechange/news/heat-pumps-russian-gas-north-sea-b2032017.html>
see also Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit, Ukraine Conflict and Impacts on UK Energy,

Any attempt to increase fossil fuel exports would lock us into decades of increased climate disrupting carbon dioxide and methane pollution, which is incompatible with mitigating catastrophic climate change. The International Energy Administration has explained that further expansion of global LNG exports cannot be part of the path to net-zero emissions.³ Exacerbating climate change would have a deeply destabilizing effect on governments not just in Europe, but around the world, which has been recognized by the Department of Defense for quite some time.⁴

While not effective at solving the short-term European energy crisis, rapidly growing LNG exports have already caused domestic prices for gas and gas-fired electricity to increase.⁵ Increasing export capacity would further expose domestic consumers to higher global prices, allowing the gas industry to boost profits, but making it harder for residential customers to pay their bills when inflation is already causing pain.

While the near-term impacts of export-induced energy price increases would be painful, it would pale in comparison to the cost of missing our shrinking window of opportunity to address the climate crisis. Nearly lost in the flood of news coverage of the war in late February, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its [6th Assessment report on February 28](#). In the accompanying press release, IPCC co-chair Hans-Otto Pörtner said loud and clear, "the scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and the health of the planet. ***Any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future.***"

This stark warning must not be ignored.

<https://eciu.net/analysis/briefings/uk-energy-policies-and-prices/briefing-ukraine-conflict-andimpacts-on-uk-energy>

³ International Energy Agency, Net Zero by 2050, at 102 (May 2021), available at https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/deebef5d-0c34-4539-9d0c10b13d840027/NetZeroby2050-ARoadmapfortheGlobalEnergySector_CORR.pdf

⁴ For example, see Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis, October 2021, available at: <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Oct/21/2002877353/-1/-1/0/DOD-CLIMATE-RISK-ANALYSIS-FINAL.PDF>

⁵ Clark Williams-Derry, Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, 11/4/2021, Booming U.S. natural gas exports fuel high prices, available at: <https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/9.%20IEEFA%2C%20Booming%20US%20Natural%20Gas%20Exports%20Fuel%20High%20Prices.pdf>