

# Granholm on pipelines: 'We want to build more'

Lesley Clark, E&E News reporter    Published: Tuesday, June 1, 2021



Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm (middle) and Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-Texas) touring an Air Liquide hydrogen plant in LaPorte, Texas, on Friday. @RepFletcher/Twitter

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm suggested Friday the Biden administration is interested in promoting the overseas sales of "clean" liquefied natural gas exports and building more pipelines, including for low-carbon fuels.

Her remarks came Friday as she touted green energy jobs at a Houston hydrogen plant and was asked by reporters about whether the Biden administration will adopt the Trump administration's zeal for marketing LNG overseas.

Granholm noted the agency has an obligation under the Natural Gas Act to approve LNG exports but added the world is moving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"What we want to do is promote and sell clean technologies, that could be natural gas that has been decarbonized," she said, according to audio of the exchange provided by DOE to E&E News. Granholm said the promotion also could include LNG where methane has been eliminated.

"I'm excited about marketing zero-carbon technologies from whatever source," she said.

The administration has not offered a clear position on LNG, prompting cautious optimism from industry, but it worries groups that want to end use of the fossil fuel.

Former President Obama got many LNG export projects off the ground, and both Energy secretaries in the Trump administration were enthusiastic supporters. Former Energy Secretary Rick Perry's department dubbed LNG "freedom gas" at one point, boasting that it provided U.S. allies with a cleaner source of energy.

Granholm's remarks followed an announcement last week from an LNG producer to develop a carbon capture project at an export facility, expanding the sector's interest in carbon capture and storage as a way to reduce its carbon footprint ([\*Energywire\*](#), May 28).

The French trading firm Engie SA last November pulled out of a \$7 billion deal to import U.S. LNG due to reported concerns over methane emissions

Granholm also clarified remarks she made earlier this month during the Colonial pipeline cyberattack when she noted that pipelines are "the best way to go" to transport gasoline to the Eastern Seaboard.

Republicans pounced on that pipeline endorsement in an effort to link the temporary gas shortages spurred by the incident to Biden's decision to scrap a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline.

Biden is less friendly to the oil industry than former President Trump, but the two pipeline situations are unrelated. The Keystone XL pipeline would have carried unrefined Canadian crude oil to the Gulf Coast. Colonial distributes petroleum products to East Coast markets.

Granholm told reporters she had been referring to the fact that Colonial's pipeline was nearly the only way to transport gas to terminals and stations.

"At the Department of Energy, we're not against pipes," she said, adding that the administration views green energy and decarbonization — which will require pipes to move carbon dioxide — as a way to create jobs.

"We want to build more pipes," she said, noting they will be used to move hydrogen as well as CO2. "There's a lot of jobs that are associated with decarbonizing ... and I think pipes are one of those opportunities."

Granholm, who has been pushing for improved cybersecurity standards following the Colonial hack, also reiterated her call for better cybersecurity standards for the oil and gas industry.

She noted "the electricity side already has standards that they use to make sure there's minimum cybersecurity protections."

Asked by a reporter whether legislation is needed to improve standards, Granholm said it was "possible."

The trip to Houston, where Granholm toured Air Liquide SA's hydrogen plant, was her first out of Washington. She later held a roundtable with several members of Congress and members of Greentown Labs Inc., a Massachusetts-based climate technology startup incubator that recently opened in Houston.

"This new wave of economy, it shouldn't be seen as a binary choice. ... [W]e want to expand the pie," Granholm said to reporters about fears that lower-paying green energy jobs could supplant better-paying jobs in the fossil fuel industry. "There are wonderful high-paying jobs in green energy, and we want to be partners in reducing CO2 for the existing energy jobs."

*Reporter Christian Vasquez contributed.*

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