

Bill aims to boost LNG exports

By Keith Magill

Executive Editor

A U.S. senator from Louisiana has introduced a bill he says is aimed at boosting exports of liquefied natural gas from the state.

“The previous administration created hurdles that stalled LNG projects that benefit the economy, environment and Louisiana workers,” Sen. Bill Cassidy said in a news release. “This legislation adds certainty to the approval process and brings investment and better-paying jobs, to Louisiana.”

Cassidy said his License Natural Gas Now Act would revamp the current system put in place by the Department of Energy decades ago. He said the measure would give the U.S. an opportunity to meet the expected 4 percent to 5 percent of annual growth for the fuel worldwide.

The LNG Act would in most cases eliminate the federal approval needed to export liquefied natural gas under longstanding laws aimed at ensuring the U.S. maintains a stable energy supply. The administration would retain the ability to limit natural gas import and export levels during See LNG, C5

Construction is underway at Cameron LNG’s export facility in Hackberry, about 25 miles southwest of Lake Charles. The facility, where about 4,500 construction workers are employed, is expected to begin operations next year.

Emergencies, disasters or exchanges with particular foreign nations.

A boom in oil and gas shale fields in parts of the U.S. has opened a major supply of natural gas that companies are seeking to export to countries that rely on it heavily for heating and other energy uses, increasing the price they are willing to pay for it. LNG terminals convert the gas to a liquid that can be transported by tanker to where it’s needed.

About \$88 billion worth of LNG projects are planned, under way or in operation across Louisiana, according to a June 21 story by the Baton Rouge Business Report. Industry officials told the publication that Louisiana, with its ready access to the Gulf of Mexico and longstanding role as an oil and gas producer, is poised to be a leader in the LNG export business.

Lake Charles has seen more than five years of job growth fueled largely by more than \$30 billion companies have invested in LNG export facilities. And in January, one of Port Fourchon's current tenants, Energy World, said it plans to build an \$800 million liquefied natural gas plant and export terminal at the oilfield Hub in south Lafourche, though no timetable has been set.

The U.S. has been exporting natural gas for nearly 100 years, Cassidy noted. But the boom that resulted from fracking shale formations made the prospect that the nation could become an exporter more plausible.

The United States has the least expensive natural gas in the world, he said. The Energy Information Agency estimates the U.S. has 2,474 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas, enough to serve its energy needs for 93 years.

Cassidy said several LNG projects have been forced to wait years for federal approval and permits, something he says his bill aims to prevent.

Cassidy's bill has been endorsed by several industry groups, including the American Petroleum Institute, the Center for Liquefied Natural Gas, G2 LNG, LNG Allies and the Natural Gas Supply Association.

"This legislation will streamline and focus the permitting process of exporting LNG from the United States," Thomas H. Hudson, CEO of G2 LNG, said in a prepared statement. "Thousands of jobs and millions of new tax revenues to local, state and federal governments stand to be created. The state of Louisiana is at the forefront of this exciting opportunity, which includes G2 LNG in Cameron Parish."