

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE STAGE 3 PROJECT AT THE CORPUS CHRISTI LNG TERMINAL
REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CORPUS CHRISTI LIQUEFACTION STAGE
III, LLC REQUESTING DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AUTHORIZATION TO
EXPORT LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FROM THE STAGE 3 LNG PROJECT TO
NON-FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NATIONS**

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 1501.6 of the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 C.F.R. § 1501.6, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) participated as a cooperating agency with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzed the potential environmental impacts associated with applications submitted to FERC by Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC (CCL Stage III); Corpus Christi Liquefaction, LLC (CCL); and Cheniere Corpus Christi Pipeline, L.P. (CCPL). Specifically, CCL Stage III and CCL sought authorization from FERC to site, construct, and operate proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) export facilities (Stage 3 LNG Project) to be located at the existing Corpus Christi LNG Terminal (Terminal) in San Patricio and Nueces Counties, Texas. CCPL requested authorization to construct, operate, and maintain associated natural gas pipeline facilities (Stage 3 Pipeline Project or, together with the Stage 3 LNG Project, the Stage 3 Project). CCL Stage III filed a related application with DOE requesting authority to export domestically produced LNG from the Stage 3 Project to non-free trade agreement countries.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 28, 2018, CCL Stage III and CCL jointly filed an application with FERC under section 3(a) of the Natural Gas Act (NGA), 15 U.S.C. § 717b(a), for authorization to site, construct, and operate the Stage 3 LNG Project. CPPL also filed an application with FERC requesting a certificate of public convenience and necessity under section 7(c) of the NGA, 15 U.S.C. § 717f, to construct, operate, and maintain the Stage 3 Pipeline Project. FERC assigned Docket Numbers CP18-512-000 and CP18-513-000, respectively, to the applications.¹

The proposed Stage 3 Project will be an expansion of the Liquefaction Project at the Corpus Christi LNG Terminal, which has already received approval by FERC under the NGA. In relevant part, the proposed Stage 3 LNG Project will increase the Terminal's capability to liquefy natural gas for export by 11.45 million metric tons per annum (mtpa) of LNG, which DOE finds is equivalent to approximately 582.14 billion cubic feet (Bcf) per year (Bcf/yr) of natural gas, or 1.59 Bcf per day (Bcf/d).

¹ Federal Energy Regulatory Comm'n, Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC, *et al.*; Notice of Application, Docket Nos. CP18-512-000, *et al.*, 83 Fed. Reg. 33,927 (July 18, 2018).

On June 29, 2018, CCL Stage III filed an application (the Application)² with DOE’s Office of Fossil Energy (DOE/FE) in FE Docket No. 18-78-LNG. CCL Stage III seeks authorization to export domestically produced LNG from the Stage 3 Project in a volume equivalent to 582.14 Bcf/yr of natural gas (1.59 Bcf/d). CCL Stage III requests authorization to export this LNG to: (i) any country with which the United States has entered into a free trade agreement (FTA) requiring national treatment for trade in natural gas (FTA countries), pursuant to NGA section 3(c);³ and (ii) any other country with which trade is not prohibited by U.S. law or policy (non-FTA countries), pursuant to NGA 3(a).⁴ On November 9, 2018, in Order No. 4277, DOE/FE granted the FTA portion of the Application in the requested volume of 582.14 Bcf/yr of natural gas.⁵

The purpose and need for DOE action is to comply with section 3(a) of the NGA, which requires DOE to issue an order granting an application for authority to export natural gas to non-FTA countries unless, after opportunity for hearing, it finds that the proposed export will not be consistent with the public interest.

FERC prepared an EA for the Stage 3 Project, which it released for comment in April 2019 and finalized in its Order Granting Authorization Under Section 3 of the Natural Gas Act, issued on November 22, 2019 (FERC Order).⁶ The FERC Order granted CCL Stage III and CCL’s application to construct and operate the Stage 3 LNG Project, and CCPL’s application to construct and operate the Stage 3 Pipeline Project, subject to appropriate mitigating measures set forth as an appendix to the Order.

Previously, on August 15, 2014, DOE/FE published the *Addendum to Environmental Review Documents Concerning Exports of Natural Gas from the United States* (79 FR 48132). Although not required by NEPA, DOE/FE prepared the Addendum in an effort to be responsive to the public and to provide the best information available on a subject that had been raised by commenters in LNG export application dockets. The Addendum addresses unconventional natural gas production in the nation as a whole. It does not attempt to identify or characterize the incremental environmental impacts that would result from LNG exports to non-FTA countries.

Adoption: All discussion and analyses related to the potential impacts of a grant of the Application are contained within the EA prepared by FERC, “Stage 3 Project Environmental Assessment”⁷—which is adopted herein (DOE/EA-2111) and incorporated by reference—as well

² Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC, Application for Long-Term Authorization to Export Liquefied Natural Gas to Free Trade Agreement Nations and Non-Free Trade Agreement Nations, FE Docket No. 18-78-LNG (June 29, 2018).

³ 15 U.S.C. § 717b(c).

⁴ *Id.* § 717b(a).

⁵ *Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC*, DOE/FE Order No. 4277, FE Docket No. 18-78-LNG, Order Granting Long-Term, Multi-Contract Authorization to Export Liquefied Natural Gas by Vessel from the Proposed Stage 3 LNG Facilities to be Located at the Corpus Christi LNG Terminal in San Patricio and Nueces Counties, Texas, to Free Trade Agreement Nations (Nov. 9, 2018). At CCL Stage III’s request, the FTA authorization is for a term of 25 years.

⁶ *Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC, et al.*, Order Granting Authorizations Under Sections 3 and 7 of the Natural Gas Act, 169 FERC ¶ 61,135 (Nov. 22, 2019)

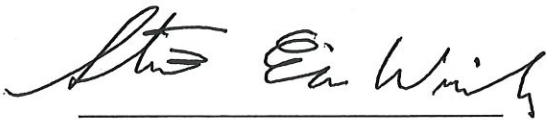
⁷ Federal Energy Regulatory Comm’n, Stage 3 Project Environmental Assessment (Corpus Christi Liquefaction Stage III, LLC, *et al.*), Docket Nos. CP18-512-000, *et al.* (Mar. 29, 2019), available at: <https://www.ferc.gov/industries/gas/enviro/eis/2019/CP18-512-EA.pdf> [hereinafter EA].

as in the FERC Order. The EA examined potential impacts in the following areas: geology; soils; groundwater; surface waters; wetlands; vegetation; wildlife and aquatic resources; special status species; land use, recreation, special interest areas, and visual resources; socioeconomics (including transportation and traffic); cultural resources; air quality and noise; reliability and safety; and cumulative impacts. The EA concluded, and FERC agreed, that with appropriate mitigating measures, the Stage 3 Project would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. DOE also considered the Addendum.

DETERMINATION: On the basis of the EA, the Addendum, and the FERC Order, DOE has determined that granting the non-FTA portion of CCL Stage III's Application to export LNG from the Stage 3 Project for a term of 20 years, subject to the environmental conditions adopted in the FERC Order, will not have a significant effect on the human environment. The preparation of an environmental impact statement, therefore, is not required, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

This FONSI will be available on the DOE/FE website at: <https://www.energy.gov/fe/corpus-christi-liquefaction-stage-iii-llc-fe-dkt-no-18-78-lng>. The EA and FONSI will also be available at: <https://www.energy.gov/nepa/ea-2111-corpus-christi-lng-stage-3-san-patricio-county-texas>.

Signed in Cairo, Egypt, on February 10, 2020.



Steven Eric Winberg
Assistant Secretary
Office of Fossil Energy
U.S. Department of Energy