

America's LNG exports could triple with Venture Global plan



Venture Global LNG Inc revealed a massive expansion of its plans to send super-chilled US natural gas overseas, a move that would almost triple the nation's ability to export the fuel. The Arlington, Virginia-based company will work with Baker Hughes to develop projects that could produce as much as 60mn tonnes of liquefied natural gas a year, double the previously announced amount. The increase is "based on customer demand," Venture Global said in a statement on Thursday. If Venture Global's plans come to fruition, the company would leapfrog Cheniere Energy Inc as the top US exporter, based on capacity. Venture Global just won approval to build its \$5bn Calcasieu Pass terminal in Louisiana and aims to break ground on another one twice the size by the end of this year. But competition in the industry is fierce. More than a dozen projects are vying to be part of the so-called second wave of US LNG exports, capitalising on the surge of gas production from shale basins. Demand for the

fuel is climbing worldwide as nations including China and India shutter or cancel coal plants in an effort to crack down on pollution. "This is going to be a strong year for LNG expansion and that will probably continue next year and beyond, simply because China and Asian demand for LNG is so strong," Stephen Ellis, equity strategist for Morningstar Inc in Chicago, said in a telephone interview. America's growing clout in the global energy market, including LNG, helps advance the nation's policy goals and contributes to security of supply across the world, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last week at the CER-AWeek by IHS Markit conference in Houston. To meet growing gas demand, the US needs to build more LNG export projects than it has planned, Perry said. For developers like Cheniere and Venture Global, signing long-term contracts is a critical part of securing financing and starting construction. But two projects backed by major oil companies got the green light without such agreements in place: LNG Canada, the \$30bn British Columbia terminal backed by Royal Dutch Shell Plc, and the \$10bn Golden Pass project being built by Qatar Petroleum and Exxon Mobil Corp in Texas.