

Why Importing LNG is a Bad Idea

Public meeting 26 May 2026, 6-7:30pm

St. Mary's Peace Hall, 44 Vivian St. New Plymouth

The government has announced its commitment to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility in Taranaki. It wants to have a contract signed by mid-2026 and approvals rushed through using 'enabling legislation' before this year's election. It is a bad idea.

Local community groups Taranaki Energy Watch, Climate Justice Taranaki, and Community Energy Taranaki invite you to a public meeting where the issues around importing LNG will be discussed.

Risks to Human Safety

The facility should not be located at Port Taranaki because of the risks and consequences from accidents, including fatalities and injuries to nearby communities.

Impacts on our Energy System and the Alternatives

Importing LNG will prolong our reliance on fossil fuels and lock us into volatile global energy pricing which will impact on electricity pricing. There are better alternative solutions to the dry year problem. These considerations are critical for achieving long-term sustainability, control and security of our energy future.

Sarah Roberts, Taranaki Energy Watch, has been involved in successful Environment Court cases for over a decade, concerning significant hazardous facilities in Taranaki.

Steve Goldthorpe, Sustainable Energy Forum, an energy systems analyst, has provided commentary on LNG issues for over a decade.

Rewiring Aotearoa, dedicated to electrifying NZ, will present some positive alternatives.

Enabling Liquefied Natural Gas Bill

The LNG facility could involve a floating storage and regasification vessel moored in Port Taranaki, although not confirmed. A Cabinet paper presented by the then Energy Minister Simon Watts stated, *“I propose developing an Enabling Liquefied Natural Gas Bill to provide the necessary consents, approvals, levy power and any modifications to existing legislation to enable the preferred LNG facility to be built and operational ahead of winter 2027.”*

This Bill, once made public, is expected to be passed under urgency, avoiding scrutiny and normal Select Committee process.

Port Kembla Energy Terminal, New South Wales

Simon Watts had referred to Port Kembla early on. This LNG terminal, with a floating storage and regasification unit, was recently commissioned, but not yet in operation. The assessment process of this facility offers a stark comparison. The Environmental Impact Statement was provided publicly. Submissions were allowed and responded to. The Environmental Protection Authority were involved. Hazards and risks were identified, independently reviewed, responded to, and shared publicly. Notably, the worst-case scenarios of a flash fire extend to nearly 2 km and toxic odorant effects out to 2.5 km.

Could such impacts and risks on the many residents around Port Taranaki be adequately assessed under an ‘Enabling’ legislation? What information would be made public? Will we have a say?

