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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SSDA-AT Supports Right to Repair Presidential Action	1
Netdriven	2, 3
Pipeline Repair Rule	4
Hawaii Clean Energy	4
Gas Power at High	5
Trump Reduces Utah Monuments	6, 7
Jones Waiver Act	8. 9
Texas LNG	10
Middle East: LNG	11
Energy Affordability in States	12
Oil & Gas Lease Sale	13
Texas Port	14
Opinion	15, 16

President Trump Signs Memorandum Expanding Consumers' Right to Repair Their Vehicles

By Roy Littlefield

President Donald Trump has signed a Presidential Memorandum aimed at expanding Americans' ability to repair their own vehicles and increasing access to affordable replacement parts.

The memorandum directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to clarify what vehicle owners can legally do when repairing emissions systems under the Clean Air Act, while also encouraging faster and more accessible certification pathways for aftermarket emissions-related parts.

The memorandum seeks to reduce reliance on California's certification process, which many in the automotive aftermarket have argued has created delays, increased costs, and limited the availability of compliant replacement parts. It also directs the EPA to consider deprioritizing enforcement actions against individuals who make good-faith efforts to restore their vehicles to their original emissions configuration.

SSDA-AT welcomes efforts that expand consumer choice, improve access to quality replacement parts, and reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers that increase repair costs.

Policies that support independent repair businesses and preserve vehicle owners' ability to maintain and repair their own vehicles help strengthen competition, lower costs for consumers, and ensure America's automotive service industry can continue serving drivers safely and efficiently.

Common Design Mistakes Made By Inexperienced Web Designers

Millions of people search the internet every single day looking for solutions to their problems and answers to their questions. Today's consumers demand the information they need to make informed purchasing decisions. In fact, nearly 88 percent of consumers research products or services online before buying in store. In today's digital landscape, an easy to find, responsive, website is vital for your business's long-term success.

Many elements need to be taken into consideration when building and launching a website. In our digital world, a website is often your business's first impression. It needs to be professional, reflect the unique qualities of your business, and provide visitors what they want – when they want it.

Building your own website or working with an inexperienced web designer can be risky. It can weaken your site's overall reach and search ranking. While spending less money or building your own website may seem like an economical decision, an experienced web design team knows how to avoid the following mistakes.

Poor Structure & Navigation

A recent study found that 94% of consumers expect a website to be easy to navigate and easy to use. If a visitor can't find what they need on your site quickly and easily, they will leave and find a frustration-free option. Easy navigation is often ranked as the most useful website feature. By adding simple navigational toolbars and menus, your website can create an intuitive user experience. A successful website delivers an instinctive user-experience that ensures a site's traffic stays both engaged and also returns.

Lack of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Over 93 percent of all online activities start on search engines like Google, Yahoo, or Bing. Why? Simple - people trust Google. By ranking high on search engines, your business builds trust and credibility. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) also pulls in quality traffic to your website. Search traffic is already interested in your products or services. These people are actively searching for the problem your business solves. Keep in mind the average person won't go past the first five listings on a search engine results page!

SEO, a way to improve your website so it appears closer to the top of search results, can put you ahead of the competition but it isn't a static

Continued on page 3

NET DRIVEN

Continued from page 2

process. It is a framework with rules and processes. If two websites are selling the same exact thing, the search engine optimized website is more likely to appear closer in the top positions in organic search results. This can have a huge impact on your company's goals – like increasing your leads and sales.

Missing Call to Action (CTA)

In digital marketing, a CTA is often a button with copy. A CTA is designed to persuade site traffic to take a particular action that will benefit your business. A successful CTA provides a better user-experience by directing what steps your site's visitors should take next – moving them down the sales funnel. Without a call to action, visitors leave your site without learning about your services, scheduling an appointment, or without providing any follow-up information. Without a clear CTA on your site, you will lose sales and customers.

Using Free or Low-Cost Templates

Rookie designers may resort to use a free or low-cost design templates. While this may seem like an easy solution, it often creates a disconnected, generic website. Your business is unique and your website should be, too. Let's say you pick a website template for your business and you love it. Unfortunately, there is nothing stopping your competitors from purchasing the same template. A good designer gets an understanding of your business and tailors the design and structure of your site to promote conversions generating more sales.

Avoiding These Common Mistakes

When you invest in a professional web design team, not only are you investing in the visual appearance and accessibility of your website, you are also investing in expert advice, techniques, and best practices creating the best possible user-experience. Professional designers and digital marketers take time to ensure each website design captures the individuality of the business, provides an excellent user-experience, and can be easily found online. A custom-designed responsive website is where it's at.

PHMSA Proposes First Major Pipeline Repair Rule Update in Decades

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has proposed sweeping updates to federal pipeline repair standards, marking the first major overhaul of gas transmission and hazardous liquid pipeline repair criteria in more than 20 years.

The agency estimates the proposed rule would save the industry about $390 million annually while improving pipeline safety through modern engineering practices.

PHMSA
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Hawai‘i committed to 100% clean energy. Now it’s flirting with natural gas.

On June 8, 2015, Gov. David Ige sat under the great seal of the state of Hawai‘i and signed the nation’s first legal commitment to run an entire state’s grid system on 100% renewable electricity.

Ige, a Democrat, lamented that Hawai‘i was “the most oil-dependent state” in the U.S.; unlike others, it relied on oil to produce nearly all of its electricity. Two months later, he shot down a pricey proposal to use another imported fossil fuel — natural gas — to reduce the islands’ dependence on oil imports. Ige’s reasoning was clear: “It’s time to focus all of our efforts on renewables,” he said.

US Cost for Gas Power at 17-Year High and Climbing, Lazard Says, Bloomberg

The cost of power from natural gas-fired plants in the US hit the highest level in at least 17 years, and is poised to climb even higher as demand surges from new data centers.

That's according to George Bilicic, global head of power, energy and infrastructure at Lazard Inc., which tracks the so-called levelized cost of energy. That's the long-term electricity price a power-plant must get to break even.

For combined cycle gas plants, that rose to $90 a megawatt-hour in 2026, according to a report. That's up from $78 a year earlier and the highest since 2009, the earliest year in the data, when the cost was $83.

It's not just gas that's getting more expensive. The cost for solar rose to $69 a megawatt-hour and onshore wind increased to $68, both up more than 10% from a year ago and the highest since at least 2014.

The findings help illuminate why utility bills are climbing in parts of the US. High electric costs have emerged as a key issue for voters, and are a talking point in the runup to the midterm elections in November.

Trump Reduces Size of 2 National Monuments in Utah as Republicans Reshape Land Management, AP

President Donald Trump sharply reduced the size of two national monuments in Utah, undoing protections established by his Democratic predecessors on public lands that are sacred among many Native Americans.

Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments in southern Utah have ancient cliff dwellings, petroglyphs and scenic canyons, as well as coal and uranium deposits that state officials want made available for development.

Trump, a Republican, issued proclamations under the Antiquities Act to reduce their size by about 90% each. He took similar actions during his first term, but those were reversed by President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

The latest move comes as Trump and other Republicans have drastically reshaped the management of vast taxpayer-owned lands concentrated in Western states. Trump administration officials and congressional Republicans have sought to expand drilling, mining and logging on public lands, while removing protections for imperiled species and rolling back rules for conservation.

“They took the land from the people quite honestly,” Trump said at a signing event at the White House. “We’re giving it back.”

President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, established Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 1996, and President Barack Obama, also a Democrat, created Bears Ears National Monument in 2016 under the Antiquities Act. The 1906 law gives presidents the powers to protect sites considered historic, archaeologically significant or culturally important.

Davina Smith-Idjesa, a citizen of the Navajo Nation and co-chair of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, said tribal leaders had braced for a reduction since Trump was elected to a second term. She said it was “heartbreaking” and accused federal officials of sidestepping their legal responsibility to consult with tribal nations that would be impacted.

“From a Navajo perspective, Bears Ears is not simply a piece of federal public land,” Smith-Idjesa said. “This is a living cultural site that holds our histories, our ceremonies, our traditional foods and medicines and our ancestors’ footprints.”

Utah officials had long fought against the monument designations and argued that the state should be in charge of controlling its own lands. Trump in his first term reduced their size, calling their creation a “massive land grab.” Combined they spanned more than 3.2 million acres (1.3 million hectares), an area

Continued on page 7

Trump Reduces Size of 2 National Monuments in Utah as Republicans Reshape Land Management, AP

Continued from page 6

nearly the size of Connecticut.

Trump reduced them to less than 303,000 acres (123,000 hectares) combined.

That's a greater reduction than his first term, when he left Grand Staircase Escalante at 1 million acres (405,000 hectares) and Bears Ears at 213,000 acres (86,000 hectares).

"This is a big day for Utah," Utah Gov. Spencer Cox as he stood next to Trump at the White House. "These monument designations are supposed to be the smallest area as possible to protect the antiquities."

Bears Ears was the first national monument created at the request of tribal nations that consider the land sacred. The landscape contains ancestral villages, ceremonial and burial sites and features in some tribes' creation and migration stories. Its designation honored five tribes in the region — Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Ute Mountain Ute and Uintah-Ouray Ute.

Home to hundreds of thousands of objects of cultural and scientific significance, Bears Ears is jointly managed by an agreement between tribal nations and federal agencies.

Grand Staircase-Escalante consists of cliffs, canyons, natural arches and archaeological sites, including rock paintings. It holds large coal reserves, while the Bears Ears area has uranium.

The national monument designation provides sweeping protections not just for significant geological features or artifacts but also for the surrounding landscape, banning drilling, mining and new construction nearby. Proponents of Trump's move to downsize say the protective boundaries stretch too far and hinder mining for critical minerals.

Trump asserted that people can not hunt, fish or "virtually not even walk" on the monuments. That's false: Hunting, fishing, camping and other recreation are permitted under state and federal regulations, said Steve Bloch, legal director for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, a conservation group.

Biden designated or expanded more than a dozen monuments and had a goal to conserve at least 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

Trump's policies are largely the opposite: He wants to tap into the natural resource wealth of federal lands that total more than 100,000 square miles (260,000 square kilometers) and offshore areas under federal control, such as in the Gulf of Mexico and off Alaska.

That's drawn backlash from Democrats who warn of the wholesale disposal of treasured landscapes for commercial gain.

Trump's Temporary Jones Act Waiver Sparks Long-Term Policy Fight, YahooFinance

Energy and shipping industry officials are locked in an increasingly bitter lobbying fight over the future of the century-old Jones Act, battling to determine the long-term fate of the critical protectionist law.

Oil and gas firms are emboldened by President Donald Trump's wartime decision to allow foreign tankers to carry cargo between American ports, and argue the 150-day waiver implemented during the Iran war proves that American consumers will enjoy lower-priced gasoline, oil, jet fuel, ammonia and other products without the law's protectionist restrictions.

Trump faces a deadline on whether to extend or end the waiver on the law, which requires vessels hauling cargo between American ports to be built, owned and crewed in the US.

Supporters of the Jones Act, including influential Republicans such as House Speaker Mike Johnson, argue a retreat from the law could usher in sweeping change for the nation's maritime industry and fatally undermine Trump's pledge to boost US shipbuilding and broader efforts to battle globalization. Private lenders are already pausing domestic maritime funding, citing the uncertainty around the law.

The looming extension has unleashed a torrent of lobbying, advertising and social media influencer posts from industries at odds over the measure. Ultimately, the decision may come down to what Trump prioritizes more: low prices or US manufacturing.

"Once you see something like this you can't unsee it," said Mike McKenna, a Republican strategist and energy lobbyist, who commends the reprieve for opening new energy routes in the US.

With the midterm elections looming, the oil lobby may have the upper hand. Gasoline prices remain elevated as recent strikes in the Strait of Hormuz have driven traffic back to the lowest levels in a month. Overall, the president's tariffs continue to push costs higher. And Trump has previously voiced skepticism over the Jones Act, weighing but ultimately backing away from administrative action to undermine the law's provisions in his first term.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright said recently the issue remained under discussion. "It's been very effective moving energy around," Wright said June 24 at an event held by Reuters. "I'm sure the dialogue about what to do there will continue."

Even without a renewal, the 150-day waiver has created an opening for Jones Act opponents to call for its removal.

The American Petroleum Institute is pushing for policy changes that would create market-based triggers to automatically activate Jones Act allowances under an array of circumstances, including fuel supply shortages, disruptions and price spikes. Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity has spent upwards of $100,000 on digital ads demanding that the Jones Act be repealed.

The path through Congress for actual repeal is tenuous, particularly considering the opposition of key House Republicans. Earlier 52 House Republicans — including Johnson and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise — asked Trump to allow the current waiver to expire.

But the administration could still implement industry-specific waivers or provisions making it easier to offer exceptions.

Jones Act supporters fret that shipbuilding investment will falter in the wake of uncertainty

Trump's Temporary Jones Act Waiver Sparks Long-Term Policy Fight, YahooFinance

Continued from page 8

around the law's future. Previously US presidents deployed the exemptions rarely — for days or weeks — such as after natural disasters including Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017.

Jones Act supporters say that the 106-year-old maritime law has contributed to expanding the number of cargo vessels built in the US, largely composed of tugboats, towboats and barges that handle trade in the Gulf and along inland or coastal waterways.

The number of Jones Act-compliant vessels, not including passenger or crewboats, has risen 14% between 1991 and 2023 to 42,574 units. Even so, American shipbuilding capacity is dwarfed by other countries, including China, which produced nearly 1,800 large commercial vessels in 2022 compared to the US's five, US Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy wrote last year.

Domestic shipbuilders are nevertheless alarmed. A $1 billion in a planned capital raise from a US maritime investment platform has already been halted because of uncertainty caused by the waiver, according to data from the Shipbuilders Council of America. There is also about $6 billion in fleet capitalization over the next five years that could be at risk, according to internal projections by the trade association seen by Bloomberg.

"Banks and investors will not spend capital on something that could possibly disappear," said Philadelphia-based ship captain Lawrence Strohm.

The American Maritime Partnership has created a digital ad in favor of the Jones Act, and more than a dozen social media influencers have posted supportive messages since mid-May.

"The facts increasingly suggest that the president is being misled," said Clay Heil, the vice president of global government relations at US shipping company Crowley Maritime Corp. Heil argued that the reprieve has not significantly reduced energy costs, while America's maritime strength hangs in the balance due to potential lost jobs and stalled investment in shipbuilding capacity.

Still, Trump's waiver has pierced the perception that the Jones Act is invulnerable, according to Colin Grabow, an associate director at the libertarian Cato Institute, which opposes the statute.

"Modernizing and taking a fresh look at the Jones Act is very appropriate, especially given the successes that we've seen over the last couple months," said Anne Bradbury, chief executive officer of the American Exploration and Production Council, which represents independent oil and gas producers.

During Trump's first term, his administration briefly considered expanding Jones Act requirements to vessels carrying equipment to offshore oil and gas facilities. But he also later weighed relaxing Jones Act mandates to facilitate shipments of liquefied natural gas to Massachusetts and Puerto Rico.

Trump eventually abandoned that LNG plan because of political pressure from key Republicans, including his trade adviser Peter Navarro. But two advisers — Trump's former chief economist, Casey Mulligan, and current National Economic Council Chairman Kevin Hassett — suggested in a pair of books that while Trump opted then to postpone action amid the political pushback, he remains skeptical of the protectionist measure.

"President Trump hates the Jones Act," Mulligan wrote.

Glenfarne Group Secures $500 million for Texas LNG Development, Gas and Oil Journal

Glenfarne Group LLC has secured fresh capital to continue development and early construction works for the proposed Texas LNG plant to be constructed on a 625-acre site in the Port of Brownsville, Tex.

HPS Investment Partners, a part of BlackRock, agreed to the $500-million investment, which serves as one of the final steps required for the 4-million tonnes/year (tpy) project to reach final investment decision (FID), Glenfarne Group said in a release July 14. FID had most recently been expected in this year's second quarter.

The capital also enables certain initiatives, including placement of purchase orders for certain critical equipment packages, said Vlad Bluzer, co-president of Texas LNG and partner at Glenfarne.

Specifically, the investment supports the recent limited notice to proceed (LNTP) granted to Kiewit, the lead engineering, procurement, and construction contractor, as part of the project's executed lump-sum turnkey contract. The LNTP will include the issuance of critical purchase orders with key equipment suppliers, EPC-phase engineering activities, and geotechnical work.

In January, the Texas LNG project secured a 20-year offtake agreement with RWE, which moved the then-fully-subscribed project to financing.

Texas LNG is part of Glenfarne's permitted North American LNG portfolio, which totals 32.8 million tpy of capacity under development across Alaska, Louisiana, and Texas.

GLENFARNE
GROUP, LLC

Middle East War Set to Push Back LNG Glut by a Year, BNEF Says, Bloomberg

The liquefied natural gas market will move into oversupply in 2028, a year later than previously forecast, as war in the Middle East and major project delays push back the emergence of a global glut, according to BloombergNEF.

After crossing into surplus, excess supply of the super-chilled fuel is expected to peak in 2031 to 2032 after multiple new projects come online, BNEF said in its global LNG outlook published. In its report a year earlier, it had forecast oversupply from 2027.

That was before war broke out in the Middle East. The world's largest LNG export plant in Qatar sustained damage from Iranian missile strikes, while shipments of the fuel via the Strait of Hormuz – a route that carried a fifth of the world's LNG before the conflict – ground to a near-halt.

After a brief uptick in shipments following last month's interim peace deal between the US and Iran, fresh hostilities in the region have effectively closed the strait once again and deepened uncertainty over when energy flows might return to normal.

"Qatar's output in coming years faces uncertainties from both existing and expansion projects," BNEF analysts said in the report. Future supply growth will be determined by the repair timeline for the two production trains damaged during the war, as well as the startup sequence for the operation's six North Field expansion trains, they said.

"Beyond engineering constraints, commercial strategy will also matter," BNEF said. "Slower contracting after the Iran war could delay project rollouts, while QatarEnergy could leverage its low production costs to accelerate volumes and compete more aggressively with US LNG as the spot market enters a period of oversupply."

While geopolitical conflict will trigger "a temporary supply dip" this year from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, total Middle Eastern supply is set to grow 50% to 147 million tons by the end of the decade, before climbing modestly to 153.8 million tons by 2035, the analysts said.

Asian LNG spot prices are likely to be supported through next year due to the war, as well as the risk of Europe missing its gas-storage refill targets. Prices are seen easing toward $8 per million British thermal unit by 2030, BNEF said. The longer that supply remains constrained and prices elevated, the harder it will be for emerging markets – particularly in Asia – to access the LNG they need to help their energy transition.

Meanwhile, the US – the world's biggest LNG producer – is also set for massive supply growth of about 146 million tons per year through 2035. American exports "are likely to act as the market's swing supply due to offtake flexibility," the BNEF analysts said.

While BNEF estimated global LNG oversupply of more than 100 million tons in 2031, it said the market "is unlikely to remain persistently oversupplied." Lower prices would eventually stimulate higher import demand, the analysts said, while also reducing utilization at higher marginal-cost liquefaction facilities, including in the US.

States Are Taking Action on Energy Affordability as Issue Grows: Report, Utility Dive

Electricity prices are up and "the level of energy burden is also on the rise in the U.S.," according to the center's "50 States of Energy Affordability" report.
"By different metrics and measures of energy burden, the estimate of energy burdened households in the U.S. ranges from 13% to 21%," it found. And on average, low-income households "spend 17.8% of their income on energy bills and transportation fuel, more than three times the national average."

Amid a national conversation around rising electricity demand, particularly from data centers, the NCCETC report found most states are taking steps to address affordability concerns. The report also concluded there is a "range of factors influencing prices, working in concert," rather than a single factor behind the increases.
"Large load additions can raise electricity demand and require new infrastructure to supply that demand, but some evidence suggests that certain large loads in some markets can actually put downward pressure on rates," the report found.

Price increases can hit households hard. "Recent survey results suggest that over 50% of households have seen their electricity bills increase and 31% have experienced increases over $50 per month," the report said. "The problems of energy burden and increasing electricity prices are neither new nor slowing down." States have taken hundreds of actions. Maryland lawmakers passed legislation in April expected to lower residential electric and gas bills by at least $150 a year, and New Jersey has launched a proceeding to consider changing how utilities operate and profit in the state.

The NCCETC report is intended to serve as a catalogue of proposed and approved executive, legislative and regulatory efforts to address high electricity prices, which have been a "persistent" issue, the center said. A 2023 U.S. Census survey found 30% of respondents went without basic necessities to pay their energy bill, according to the report.
"State policymakers and utilities can take immediate action to lower energy costs for customers," Nick Montoni, NCCETC senior program director, said in a statement. "Whether by improving utility efficiencies, increasing utility oversight, or providing direct payments or programs to customers, there is a range of options that can ease energy costs, without waiting years to bring new infrastructure online."
A June report from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy found U.S. electric utilities are increasing their investment in low-income energy efficiency programs, but the growing number of Americans considered income-challenged means a "gap" in funding persists.

Most utilities "are still underinvesting in low-income programs relative to the corresponding proportion of income-qualified population in their service territories," the ACEEE report said. It noted a 14.4% gap, on average, between utility investment in programming for income-limited customers and the prevalence of low-income households, based on 2024 program reports and other sources.

August Bid Date Opening Path to 80 million Acres in Third Gulf of America Oil & Gas Lease Sale, Offshore Energy

BOEM has announced the final notice of sale for Big Beautiful Gulf 3 (BBG3), the third of 30 Gulf of America lease sales required by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. This final notice of sale is scheduled to publish in the Federal Register on July 8, initiating a 30-day waiting period before the lease sale.

The bureau will livestream the public bid reading on August 12, 2026, at 9 a.m. Central Time. The bid reading venue will be closed to the public, but registered bidders may attend in person. The final notice of sale outlines a path for expanded offshore leasing in the Gulf of America.

Lease sale BBG3 plans to offer approximately 15,100 unleased blocks, covering roughly 80.4 million acres on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of America. The blocks are located between 3 and 231 miles offshore and include water depths ranging from 9 to more than 11,100 feet.

“This third Congressionally directed sale builds on the momentum of the first two sales and supports responsible development of America’s offshore energy resources, continued investment in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, and American energy independence.”

This lease sale is said to directly support Executive Order 14154, ‘Unleashing American Energy,’ which directs federal agencies to accelerate offshore oil and gas development to lower energy costs, reinforce national energy security, and enhance America’s global competitiveness, delivering on President Donald J. Trump’s promise to expand U.S. energy production and strengthen energy dominance.

The Gulf of America Outer Continental Shelf spans approximately 160 million acres and is estimated to contain 26.90 billion barrels of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and 45.59 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

BOEM has confirmed that certain areas will be excluded from the sale, including blocks subject to the September 8, 2020, presidential withdrawal; blocks adjacent to or beyond the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in the Eastern Gap; blocks within the boundaries of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary; and any block currently under appeal.

“Offshore oil and gas leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf generates billions in revenue through lease sales, rental fees, and royalties. These funds are distributed to the U.S. Treasury and to states via revenue-sharing programs that support coastal restoration, hurricane protection, and other public services and conservation efforts,” underlined the bureau.

“The General Fund of the U.S. Treasury receives the largest portion of offshore revenues, helping to finance the daily operations of the federal government. In addition, these key revenues generated by Outer Continental Shelf development create high-quality jobs, funds infrastructure and education, and contributes to local economies.”

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management highlights that American energy dominance is a cornerstone of U.S. economic strength, national security, and global stability.

“President Trump’s dedication to expanding domestic offshore energy capabilities ensures affordable energy for U.S. consumers, further strengthens the United States’ position in the global energy market, and reduces America’s reliance on foreign sources,” underscored BOEM.

BOEM
BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Texas Port CEO Sees US Oil Exports Holding Above Prewar Levels, Bloomberg

The historic boost to US crude exports triggered by Iran war disruptions to global energy supply will likely endure and has even revived interest in new pipeline infrastructure, according to the head of the largest US oil port.

US oil exports surged this year as the near-closure of the Strait of Hormuz choked off Mideast crude and sent buyers scrambling for alternative supplies. The market tightening was a major boon to US oil companies and the ports that handle their product including the Port of Corpus Christi.

"It's been a nonstop parade of ships past our windows," Port of Corpus Christi Chief Executive Officer Kent Britton said in an interview with Bloomberg News. The port had a record first half of the year for cargoes of commodities such as oil and liquefied natural gas passing through its waterways.

As many as 6.4 million barrels a day of oil, the highest level in US history, flowed on an fleet of ships from facilities along the coasts of Texas and Louisiana. Before the war, the US exported about 4 million barrels daily. As a tentative truce between the US and Iran collapses amid a new wave of attacks, the question remains whether the US will entrench its status as the backstop to global oil markets.

The US could likely export a million barrels a day more than prewar levels, according to Britton. "There has to be a demand signal. There has to be a supply signal from the big E&Ps who have to say that they're willing to go fill that need," Britton said, referring to oil producers.

Some 400,000 of those daily barrels could leave from Corpus Christi and the remainder from other ports along the US Gulf Coast such as Houston and terminals in Louisiana.

"There's no coincidence to why the president stood in Corpus Christi the day he made a decision to go into Iran," Port of Corpus Christi Commission Chairman Gabe Guerra said in the interview at Bloomberg News' Houston bureau.

The boost to US crude exports has even revived conversations about a pipeline connecting Corpus Christi to the oil hub of Cushing, Oklahoma, which serves as the main conduit for shipping Canadian and Bakken Basin oil to fuel makers and exporters in the US. Port of Corpus Christi has been in talks this year about such a pipeline, Britton said, declining to name the companies involved. Phillips 66 and Plains All American Pipeline LP previously planned a pipeline on the route, but the project was halted amid a slow recovery in US oil output in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Corpus currently only exports barrels of oil produced in Texas from the Permian and Eagle Ford basins.

"If I were building for the future, I would get a pipeline out of Cushing," Britton said.

Opinion: Leadership at All Levels is Key to Changing Skills Landscape, HRDirector

In boardrooms and on shop floors across every sector, one challenge in particular continues to present itself, the need for stronger leadership and management capability. Not just at the top, but at every level of the organization, including entry level.

It's an immediate, operational concern, requiring urgent attention. Employers are asking more of their people than ever before; to lead teams through change, support wellbeing, develop others, all while integrating the next generation into their workforce with confidence and clarity of purpose.

The real leadership challenge facing employers

Leadership is often discussed in the context of senior executives. But in practice, its impact is felt elsewhere, among those who shape the day-to-day experience of work.

The actions of frontline supervisors, first-line managers and operational leaders will impact the team leader tasked with onboarding an apprentice, the supervisor managing performance and morale, the middle manager aiming to translate strategy into action.

All these roles affect an organisation's ability to retain talent, build capability and embed new entrants into the workforce. And managers must now wear many hats; where once they were merely task owners, now they must be mentors, coaches and culture carriers.

A shifting skills marketplace

Meanwhile, young people stepping into employment must now navigate dynamic and uncertain environments, meaning that the quality of immediate, human leadership is more critical than ever. Employer expectations have changed, notably in a shift in emphasis – away from purely technical capability and towards 'employability' skills.

Attributes like confidence, communication, and the ability to work with others have become baseline requirements. They underpin high-performing teams and help organisations navigate constant change. They're no longer optional extras.

And yet, at the very moment their importance is being acknowledged, some of the funding for apprenticeships that have traditionally helped nurture these skills – and support entry into work – is being removed.

Sixteen apprenticeship standards are due to lose funding this year, including widely-used leadership and management routes that have long provided a structured pathway for developing these behaviours. For many employers, this could mean that funding sources for this valuable training become increasingly scarce.

Why this matters for employers

This is why the conversation about mentoring, management and leadership skills matters – not just for those at risk of falling out of education or employment, but for any young person trying to gain a foothold in an increasingly competitive labour market.

Leadership is no longer confined to formal management roles. It's a suite of capabilities that underpin progress in every sector. Communication, problem solving, decision-making and teamwork enable individuals to contribute effectively, build confidence, and grow into positions of responsibility.

And the presence (or absence) of these attributes is become increasingly apparent to employers.

Opinion: Leadership at All Levels is Key to Changing Skills Landscape, HRDirector

Continued from page 15

Early-career employees often require consistent supervision, coaching and support. Yet the programmes that have traditionally helped managers develop these capabilities are under mounting pressure. Increasingly, the result is that organisations' expectations of managers are frustrated by a lack of available support to help them deliver.

The risk of removing foundations

As leadership development evolves, there is a risk that something essential is lost: structured, supported progression.

For individuals stepping into management for the first time, leadership capability does not emerge fully formed. It is built through guided learning and reflective application, and depends upon consistent frameworks, along with the time required to develop confidence.

Without this foundational ramp, organisations may find themselves with managers who are technically capable, but underequipped for the realities of leading people – particularly those entering the workplace for the first time.

Supporting a stronger leadership pipeline

This is where a more structured approach to leadership development continues to have an important role to play.

Approaches that offer clear progression, practical application and space for reflection can help individuals build the confidence to step into leadership roles and develop within them. This is particularly important for those taking on responsibility for others for the first time.

At these early stages, development is not just about acquiring knowledge. It's about building the judgement, interpersonal skills and self-awareness needed to lead people effectively in real workplace situations. Supporting this kind of development helps ensure that managers are better prepared for the realities of their role – especially when they are responsible for guiding and developing others.

Investing where it matters most

Organisations looking for the greatest return on their investment in leadership should turn their attention to the managers responsible for onboarding and developing early-career talent.

Why? Because it's these managers who determine whether individuals feel capable, included and able to progress. Their impact extends beyond performance, influencing retention, culture and long-term organisational capability. Strengthening leadership at this level is not simply a development priority – it's a business necessity.

Building systems, not shortcuts

Leadership development is not a one-off intervention. It is an ongoing system requiring oversight and maintenance. The focus should not be on replacing one route with another, or prioritising short-term fixes. Instead, employers should focus on sustaining a system that recognises leadership at every level, supporting progression from first steps through to senior responsibility. And, crucially, equipping managers to develop others as well as themselves.

Ultimately, the message for employers is simple – extra chairs in the boardroom are no longer a leadership fix. Instead, they need better-supported managers at every level, who can help the next generation to succeed.

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