Oil and Gas News Briefs
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Russian official says gasline deal with China possible by year-end

(Bloomberg; Oct. 21) - Russia said Gazprom and China National Petroleum Corp. may reach a commercial agreement by year-end on gas supplies via the Power of Baikal line, a route with the potential to reshape global energy flows. “We are waiting for our companies to hold commercial talks,” Interfax quoted Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak on Oct. 21. “We hope that by year-end they will reach the necessary agreements,” he said, referring the route formerly known as Power of Siberia 2.

The nations have for years been trying to reach a deal on the line, which would more than double Russia’s gas exports to China. They already have deals on deliveries via the original, already functioning Power of Siberia line, as well as a separate future Far Eastern route. For Power of Baikal, details on pricing and volume flexibility have been among stumbling blocks in talks, though Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin have repeatedly said the remaining differences may be resolved quickly.

China, however, has been wary of becoming overly dependent on a single gas supplier, with Russia already one of its top energy providers. Power of Baikal, which is set to cross Mongolia, is envisioned to ship as much as 1.7 trillion cubic feet a year from gas fields in Russia’s western Siberia that until a few years ago had served dozens of European customers. That’s equivalent to more than 10% of current Chinese demand and would equal the capacity of the original Power of Siberia pipeline.

U.S. LNG gas demand went from zero to 20 bcf a day in past 10 years

(RBN Energy; Oct. 20) - A decade ago, the first large-scale liquefied natural gas cargo produced in the Lower 48 states was exported from Sabine Pass, Louisiana. Now, the U.S. is home to eight export terminals, with seven more under construction, and feed gas demand for LNG has surpassed 20 billion cubic feet per day for the first time. As U.S. shale gas production climbed in the late 2000s and early 2010s, it became clear that, far from running out of gas, the U.S. was heading toward a massive surplus.

The abundance of low-cost gas spurred significant investment, driving a build-out of gas-fired power generation and LNG export facilities. In July 2012, Cheniere Energy reached a final investment decision on the first two trains at Sabine Pass LNG, paving the way for construction of the first LNG terminal in the Lower 48. The first train began exporting in 2016 and over the next four years was joined by Cove Point in Maryland, Corpus Christi and Freeport in Texas, Cameron in Louisiana and Elba Island in Georgia.

The sites — all converted from pre-existing LNG import terminals — were the first wave. By the beginning of 2020, U.S. LNG export capacity had reached around 7.5 bcf a day. The build-out at the existing terminals was still underway and by the end of 2020 feed gas demand was over 11 bcf a day. In 2022, Venture Global's Calcasieu Pass LNG in Louisiana became the first fully greenfield export terminal, followed by Plaquemines LNG in Louisiana in 2025. In late 2025, the most recent expansion at Cheniere's Corpus Christi terminal began ramping online, and U.S. feed gas demand soared above 19 bcf a day. Golden Pass LNG in Texas took the country past 20 bcf a day this year.

Global energy crisis extends to fertilizers and food security

(Financial Times; London; Oct. 20) - The global energy shock sparked by President Donald Trump's Iran war has pushed up fuel prices and created an affordability crisis stretching from New Delhi to New York. But is there worse to come now that hopes of a speedy end to the conflict have been extinguished? That is the verdict of S&P Global Institute, which has issued a stark warning that a food security crisis is a major risk due to the combined impact of geopolitical conflicts and one of the strongest ever recorded El Niño events, a naturally occurring phenomenon that increases weather-related risks.

"The world's food producers rely on a steady supply of natural gas and sulfur for fertilizer, diesel for machinery and transport, and open sea lanes for trade. … Conflict is now testing all of them at once," said the first major report published by the S&P Global Institute. As more than 2 billion barrels of crude have been blocked from global markets as well as large amounts of diesel and liquefied natural gas, there has been much less focus on the role that the Mideast plays in supplying fertilizer, as well as the feedstocks that other countries rely on to make a product that is critical to food production.

Almost a third of the global trade in urea — the world's most widely used nitrogen fertilizer — typically passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Almost half the global trade in sulfur, a key nutrient in fertilizer that stimulates plant growth, passes through the strait. About a fifth of the merchant trade in ammonia, another component of urea, does the same and has faced severe disruption due to the war. Making fertilizer is also a highly energy-intensive business, and skyrocketing costs of natural gas and diesel — an important fuel for farmers — are adding to the pressure on food production.

New U.S. proposal asks Europe to resume buying Russian gas

(The New York Times; Oct. 17) - A key element in the Trump administration's plan for securing peace in Ukraine is a proposal that would turn years of American energy policy upside down. Europe, the U.S. pitch goes, should resume buying more Russian gas — a move that would be an economic boon for Moscow and give it renewed influence in the region. President Donald Trump's envoys, Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, have

raised the idea in talks with Ukrainian and European officials, including with President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv last month, according to people familiar with the talks.

To help entice Russia to end the war in Ukraine, the Americans have argued, Ukraine should consider restarting pipelines that used to carry Russian natural gas to Europe. European officials in the talks have recoiled at the idea, which would undo the European Union's years of efforts, backed by Washington, to rid itself of Russian gas. But Trump officials see Russian gas exports as a potential part of a peace settlement, given the pipeline transit revenues that could flow to Ukraine and what they see as the inevitable desire for cheaper energy by European voters, the people said.

The disconnect underscores the unusual — and, critics say, fatally flawed — nature of Trump's renewed diplomatic effort to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Rather than pressure President Vladimir Putin or try to strengthen Ukraine's war effort, the administration has spent significant time exploring economic incentives for Russia and raising them in talks with Europe and Ukraine. Given how much European and Ukrainian leaders oppose returning to a reliance on Russian gas, the new proposal may end up further complicating the Trump administration's efforts to end the war.

Taiwan says Alaska LNG project subject to more negotiations

(The Chosun Daily; South Korea; Oct. 20) - U.S. President Donald Trump announced that following on South Korea, Taiwan has also promised large-scale investment in the proposed Alaska LNG project. However, the Taiwanese government stated that specific investment conditions and equity ratios remain unfinalized and will be determined through negotiations. This comes after the South Korean government clarified that no confirmed agreement exists regarding Trump's claim of a $54 billion investment, with Taiwan also distancing itself from unilateral announcements of confirmed investments.

President Trump stated during a Republican midterm election rally in Alaska, on Oct. 13 that "Taiwan has just agreed to purchase 30% of the natural gas produced by the Alaska gas pipeline over the next 20 years." He added, "This is one of the largest contracts in history that guarantees the success of the project," and that "Taiwan will invest $4.4 billion in this project in addition to the $50 billion already promised by South Korea."

However, a statement released by Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs on Oct. 14 differed from Trump's announcement. The ministry explained that since Taiwan CPC Corp., a state-owned company, signed a letter of intent regarding the purchase and investment in Alaska LNG in March 2025, negotiations and feasibility assessments have been ongoing for about a year and a half. "Taiwan CPC Corp. will continue consultations with the U.S. side regarding purchase and investment, and proceed with business research and budget approval procedures according to internal company protocols."

Kong Mingxin, Taiwan’s Minister of Economic Affairs, said at a meeting with reporters on Oct. 15: “We will first finalize the purchase volume and then discuss the investment structure further.” He added: “Actual equity ratios, investment conditions and detailed terms can only be confirmed once negotiations between the two sides are completed.”

China says Taiwan looks to Alaska LNG to curry favor with U.S.

(China Daily; Oct. 21) - A Chinese mainland spokeswoman stated on Oct. 21 that Taiwan's proposed purchase of liquefied natural gas from a project in Alaska reflects the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities' attempts to curry favor with the United States at Taiwan's expense. Zhang Han, a spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, made the remarks at a regular news conference.

According to media reports, the DPP authorities have agreed to purchase 30% of the LNG output from the proposed project in Alaska and invest $4.4 billion to ensure the project's completion. Taiwan's economic affairs department confirmed on Oct 14 that the island would purchase 6 million tonnes of LNG from the project each year once production begins. In response, China’s Zhang criticized the DPP authorities for seeking to curry favor with the U.S. at Taiwan's expense and pursuing "Taiwan independence" by relying on U.S. support. "Such attempts will not succeed," she said.

Mideast oil exports recover to pre-war levels, but prices remain high

(Wall Street Journal; Oct. 20) - Persian Gulf oil exports have surpassed prewar levels, as an improvised shipping system under U.S. protection is helping tankers move oil through one of Iran’s fiercest waves of attacks in the Strait of Hormuz. Total Middle East oil flows, including shipments through Hormuz and alternative routes across the region, averaged more than 24 million barrels a day in the week through Oct. 18, surpassing prewar levels of 23.3 million, according to ship tracker Kpler.

Preliminary figures show Hormuz oil flows alone, including offshore transfers in the Gulf of Oman, came to around 14 million barrels a day on average for the same period, or 82% of prewar levels. Oil prices remain high, and benchmark Brent crude has risen in recent days to around $108 a barrel Oct. 20. Traders are concerned the improvement in Hormuz oil flows might not be sustainable, however, particularly if fighting breaks out again. Thinning global inventories leave little margin for error. The transit operation is also expensive, costs that ultimately flow through to consumers at the pump.

Still, the resilience of oil flows marks a shift in the battle over the world’s most important energy chokepoint. Iran can still make shipments dangerous and expensive. But its ability to deter transits has faded, weakening Tehran’s leverage with the U.S. “The big picture is that the system for shipping through a dangerous Strait of Hormuz is now well-

established and the risk appetite of those involved in exporting oil has risen," said Hamad Hussain, a senior commodities economist at Capital Economics.

U.S. blockade shuts down Iran's main oil export terminal

(Bloomberg; Oct. 19) - Iran's main oil-loading terminals have remained empty for weeks, adding to signs that a U.S. naval blockade of the country is throttling Tehran's exports. No tankers have docked at Kharg Island's crude export terminals since late August, an analysis of ship-tracking data and European Union satellite images shows. That's the longest stretch of inactivity at the island since the start of the U.S.-Iran war in February.

The lack of tankers at Kharg, deep inside the Persian Gulf, points to the increasing pressure on Iran since the U.S. renewed its military blockade of the country's shipping three months ago. Iran's crude exports have plunged from almost 1 million barrels a day in July to nothing since late August, according to vessel-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg and figures from Kpler and Vortexa.

Iran exported nearly 650 million barrels of crude in the year through April, with most ending up in China, tanker-tracking data show. Now, as Tehran's oil disappears from global markets, Chinese refiners are turning to other sources and competing with other buyers for barrels and ships. That's pushed oil prices higher and fueled a historic rally in freight. As Iran has been thwarted in its attempts to export its production, Tehran has stepped up attacks on non-Iranian vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

Russian oil traffic through Northern Sea Route up 50% from last year

(Reuters; Oct. 19) - Russia's oil exports through its Northern Sea Route in 2026 have already exceeded last year's by nearly 50%, with some 20 million barrels shipped to Asia from the start of navigation in July to mid-October, traders said and data showed. The NSR links Russia's western ports with Asian markets through icy Arctic waters and is considered a more dangerous and expensive route. This year, however, it became more attractive as a result of disruptions to routes through the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz and the Black Sea area, traders said.

Tanker freight rates have soared to record highs as wars with Iran and in Ukraine have stoked inflation and put U.S. crude oil out of reach for Asian refiners, driving them to seek alternatives from the Middle East and Latin America. This made high tariffs for ships using the NSR, which requires assistance from an icebreaker, less costly compared with the usual route to Asia through the Red Sea, traders said. For Russia, which controls the NSR, it represents a secure alternative to European waters, where tankers with its oil have been regularly arrested this year.

The volume of Russian oil exported through the Arctic route is expected to rise by another 5 million to 10 million barrels by the end of the navigation period, traders' preliminary estimates show. The Arctic is rapidly emerging as a key geopolitical hotspot as melting ice opens new shipping routes. Russia shipped 13 million barrels during the past navigation season. Gazprom Neft, one of Russia's major oil companies, plans to increase its shipments via the NSR by some 35% this year compared with 2025.

U.S. authorizing sanctioned oil tankers to become non-sanctioned

(Bloomberg; Oct. 19) - The Trump administration is authorizing the sale of sanctioned oil tankers in an effort to allow the vessels to start legitimately shipping crude, U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said. The U.S. government is working with investors who buy idled sanctioned tankers, refurbish them and use the ships to transport non-sanctioned oil, Wright said on Oct. 19 at a Citadel Securities event in New York. “We’re going to move some of the ships from what I call the ‘bad-guy fleet’ to the ‘good-guy fleet,’” Wright said. “They will not carry sanctioned oil anymore.”

His comments represent the first detailed public explanation from the administration about turning to sanctioned tankers as it seeks to expand the number of ships available to move crude and boost supply disrupted by the war in Iran and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The administration is undertaking an approval process to grant ships legitimate status, Wright said. He rejected the idea that the U.S. was simply removing sanctions from tankers that carried crude from nations such as Russia or Iran.

The move comes as U.S. Republicans confront voters who are concerned about higher fuel costs weeks before midterm elections. Gasoline and diesel prices surged following the Mideast conflict, adding a pain point for voters already worried about affordability. Wright estimated there are about 1,600 vessels in the global “dark fleet” of sanctioned tankers. The Trump administration’s effort to convert those into lawful ships could ultimately add “dozens” or even “hundreds” of tankers to the legitimate fleet, he said.

Middle East disruption boosts the Americas as reliable oil supply

(Financial Times; London; Oct. 19) – President Donald Trump’s war in Iran is driving an oil and gas production and export boom in the Americas, as customers race to secure reliable supply amid a growing realization that Middle East disruption could be prolonged. Countries from Canada to Brazil have set production records this year, with total output in North and South America on course to jump 10% in the two years ending December 2026, according to Rystad Energy.

Venezuela and Suriname are poised to increase production sharply following a wave of investments from Western oil concerns, and output in the U.S. is also rising, with a 15%

increase in exports of crude and petroleum products such as diesel to Europe, Asia and Oceania. Seven months into the war, parts of the Americas, particularly Venezuela and Argentina, are starting to emerge as Trump envisioned through a policy he dubbed the “Donroe doctrine” — a U.S.-led sphere of influence with vast energy resources and the potential to counterbalance other global energy power canters such as the Middle East.

Analysts said the oil and gas boom is transforming economies in South America and further enshrining the Americas as a counterweight to the Middle East. The Americas cannot fully replace low-cost Middle East supply, but it is moderating global prices and will limit OPEC’s pricing power in the future, they said. “Even countries in the Gulf will seek diversification by investing in the Americas,” said Daniel Yergin, vice-chair of S&P Global and author of “The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power.”

Washington state critics of new oil line coordinate with Canadians

(Washington State Standard; Oct. 20) - Canada’s economic pivot away from the U.S. includes fast-tracking a new oil pipeline from Alberta to a proposed marine terminal in British Columbia, practically on the border with Washington state. The proposed Pacific Link project entails a 775-mile pipeline from Alberta’s oil sands region to a new tanker loading terminal on the Strait of Georgia in the Vancouver suburb of Delta. As proposed, the line will be capable of delivering up to 1 million barrels a day to a pair of supertanker berths located less than two miles from the maritime border with Washington.

The massive undertaking has environmentalists, tribes and Democratic politicians in Washington state deeply concerned about increased tanker traffic and oil spill risk in the shared Salish Sea, and they are working to coordinate their opposition efforts with like-minded British Columbians. “We recognize that there are conflicts between our countries that are much greater than us. We are not going to be able to solve those issues. But on this issue, we can coalesce for the good of the environment and for the good of our communities,” said San Juan County Council Chair Justin Paulsen.

Paulsen said the San Juan council has coordinated with councilors in the Gulf Islands Trust in Canada to raise concerns about increased vessel traffic. If the pipeline starts operations in the early 2030s as planned, more oil-laden tankers would travel through the narrow passageways between the Gulf Islands and San Juan Islands, then down Haro Strait and out to sea past Victoria, British Columbia, and Port Angeles, Washington. “The U.S.-Canada border is not going to stop a spill, right?” said Lovel Pratt, marine policy director for the group Friends of the San Juans.

EU appears to be relaxing opposition to Arctic oil and gas production

(Bloomberg; Oct. 19) - The European Union looks to be relaxing its opposition to oil and gas production in polar areas, while still calling for all fossil fuels to be kept in the ground in its forthcoming Arctic strategy. A draft of the strategy, seen by Bloomberg, contains no references to a moratorium on new oil and gas drilling in the Arctic, marking a shift in wording from the EU's 2021 stance. The wording has been a topic of intense discussions between the trade bloc and Norway, which has lobbied hard for the EU to abandon its climate-based opposition to oil and gas exploration in the high north.

The Nordic nation awarded five oil and gas exploration licenses in the Barents Sea, which is part of the Arctic, in last year's licensing round and opened up 38 blocks in 2026 for applications. Norway supplied almost a third of EU's gas imports last year, including a small part from those fields. The petroleum industry's fear was that the EU would pledge not to buy oil and gas from Norway's new Arctic fields.

Instead, the draft says the union will "prioritize" renewable energy and hydrocarbons produced outside the Arctic. The European Commission also says it will work toward an international commitment to prevent further development of Arctic oil and gas resources, or purchases from them, when such activity "poses a threat to the Arctic ecosystem." In 2021, the EU had said that "building on the partial moratoriums on hydrocarbons exploration in the Arctic" in parts of the U.S., Canada and Greenland, it was "committed to ensuring that oil, coal and gas stay in the ground, including in Arctic regions."

U.K. approves new North Sea offshore gas project

(The New York Times; Oct. 21) - More than half a century ago, massive discoveries of oil and gas reserves in the North Sea turned Britain into an energy powerhouse and reshaped its economy. But over the years, the politics and geology of extracting fossil fuels have changed dramatically. Production in the North Sea steadily dropped as the basin aged. The urgent need to tackle global warming meant drilling faced increasing political pressure, higher taxes and tougher regulations.

Now the British government, in a decision the Prime Minister Andy Burnham characterized as "pragmatic," has greenlit a major offshore natural gas project in the North Sea. He also pledged billions of dollars through a new fund to bolster renewable energy across the country. "We're committed to moving toward renewable energy and reaching net zero by 2050," Burnham said in a statement. But, he added, "Even on our ambitious climate path, we'll still require oil and gas as part of our energy needs for decades to come. That's why we're taking a pragmatic approach to the North Sea."

The approval for the Jackdaw field, off the coast of Scotland, is a major victory for Britain's oil and gas industry, unions and cities in Britain's energy heartland, which consider the project an economic lifeline. Environmental activists called the approval of

Jackdaw a betrayal of the country's efforts to address rising global temperatures. Jackdaw will be the site of the first new oil and gas extraction in Britain's North Sea since the Labor government imposed a moratorium on new drilling in 2024.

Alberta oil sands to grow with automation and efficiencies, not jobs

(Reuters; Oct. 18) - Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney is betting a new pipeline to the West Coast for exports can help revive the country's oil industry, boost its production and exports, and reduce its dependence on the U.S. Bringing back jobs will be much harder. In the Alberta oil hub of Fort McMurray — nicknamed Fort McMoney in its heyday more than a decade ago — the tens of thousands of oil field jobs that powered the last boom are unlikely to return, even if Carney gets his pipeline.

Instead, much of the growth in oil sands output is likely to come from automation and efficiency gains rather than large-scale hiring, according to industry forecasts and nearly a dozen interviews with company officials, workers, politicians and academics. More oil without many more permanent jobs could leave Carney politically exposed on two fronts: Critics on the left say his efforts to fast-track the pipeline's regulatory approval risks sacrificing the environment, while those on the right argue the deregulation should deliver faster economic growth, higher salaries and more oil jobs.

An August labor forecast by industry group Energy Safety Canada projects that oil sands employment will fall by 920 jobs, or 4%, by 2035, even as production grows 6%. A spokesperson for Energy Safety Canada told Reuters that a new West Coast pipeline would likely reverse the projected job decline but may not add many permanent jobs because of the "structural trend" of producing more oil with fewer workers. "Nobody should expect that something that happened 15 years ago will happen the same way today," said Dianna De Sousa, CEO of the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce.

Korean-built tankers headed to Russian LNG terminals

(The Barents Observer; Oct. 19) - On Oct. 15, four powerful LNG carriers sailed through the Bering Strait and into Russia's Sea of Okhotsk, heading east, all with freshly painted letters on their hulls. The ships — the Oneiroi, Melicertes, Neleus and Aeolus — had been renamed shortly before their Arctic voyage, data from Equasis, a ship information system, shows. The ships were built at the Hanwha Ocean shipyard in Okpo, South Korea, in 2024 and 2025, and were until recently owned and operated by the Japanese shipping company Mitsui OSK Lines.

Along with the name change came a change of flag state and ownership. On Sept. 1, all of the ships changed flag states from Singapore to Panama. Similarly, they all share the same ISM manager — the company responsible for ensuring that a vessel complies

with the International Safety Management Code. Most likely, all four tankers are connected with Novatek, the Russian natural gas company that owns and operates Russia's two biggest LNG export plants, Yamal LNG and Arctic LNG 2.

Three of the ships — the North Moon, North Ocean and North Light — were added to the European Union sanctions list in May 2025 but were then excluded from the list four months later. Reuters reported that the exclusion followed a guarantee from Mitsui OSK not to participate in the transport of LNG from Yamal LNG and Arctic LNG 2. One year later, the four transferred ships might again be liable for sanctions. The carriers are probably part of the growing fleet of tankers serving Novatek and its Arctic operations.

Australia's LNG trade partners push back against gas legislation

(Sydney Morning Herald; Oct. 19) - Australia is risking a backlash from major trade partners over the government's refusal to allow expiring gas-export deals to be rolled over without being subject to new domestic-reservation rules, even if those contracts contain built-in extension options. The government last week introduced its long-awaited domestic gas-reservation bill to parliament, which would compel the largest LNG exporters to set aside up 20% of annual export volumes for local customers from 2028.

The policy is aimed at injecting a "modest" oversupply of gas into the local market each year to drive down heating, power and manufacturing costs for households and industry, addressing a long-standing grievance that consumers have faced soaring gas prices at home despite Australia's position as one of the world's top LNG exporters. To safeguard Australia's trade relationships with major Asian LNG customers, including Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and China, the government pledged that existing long-term contracts — signed on or before Dec. 22, 2025 — would be exempt.

However, the bill explicitly decrees that contracts renewed, extended or rolled over after that date will lose that protection — defying demands from Japanese and Korean state-backed energy companies that extension options are an integral part of investment terms and must be honored. The section is one of multiple flashpoints in the proposed legislation that have sparked a backlash from gas producers and their Asian partners. Industry leaders have also raised alarm over a "must-sell" obligation that would require LNG producers to deliver their prescribed volumes to local buyers, raising concerns that producers may be forced into uncommercial deals to meet compliance targets.

New LNG-fueled plant will power northern Canadian community

(CBC News; Canada; Oct. 18) - For Fort Simpson, in Canada's Northwest Territories, liquefied natural gas is the new diesel. The federal government is contributing more than C$31.3 million, paired with approximately C$10.4 million from the Northwest

Territories Power Corp., to build a new power plant in the Mackenzie River community. The plant will primarily generate power using LNG and replace an existing diesel plant. Doug Prendergast, communications manager with NTPC, said about 90% of the power will be generated with natural gas, with the remaining 10% coming from diesel.

“The initial main driver for the [liquefied natural gas] plant was emissions reduction,” said Prendergast. Plus, he said, it's cheaper. The company expects a cost savings of about 10% to 15%. The LNG likely will be trucked from a liquefaction plant about 300 miles to the south in Fort Nelson, British Columbia. That plant can liquefy about 2.2 million cubic feet of natural gas a day into 27,000 gallons of the fuel, which can move in tandem-trailers capable of hauling 20,000 gallons in a trip. The new power plant will include two 1.6-megawatt gas generation units and two backup diesel generation units.

For some in the community of about 1,200 residents, the main benefit is that the new plant won’t be in danger of slipping into the river, like the current one. “It'll give us an alternate power supply in a better, safer location off the main island,” said Sean Whelly, a former mayor. The diesel power plant has flooded a number of times, and the ground beneath erodes during spring break-up. Planning for the new plant is underway, with construction expected to start in 2027 and completion by 2029-2030. Until then, the diesel plant will provide power to the community — as long as it remains above water.