MNI Gas Weekly: Gas Under Rising Pressure

By Lawrence Toye, Daniel Dawson, & Zach Simon (17/12/2025)

Executive Summary:

- **European Gas Benchmarks** weigh Ukraine peace talks against cooler weather forecasts.
- Asia's **LNG market** has fallen to its lowest level in over a year, but cheaper cargoes may revive some spot buying.
- In the **Middle East & Africa**, Egypt diverted at least two LNG cargoes in early December.
- **Henry Hub** retreated from a three-year high amid warm weather and reduced feedgas demand.
- In **the Americas,** Venezuela ended all of its supply contracts with Trinidad.

European Natural Gas

TTF has traded within a ~€1.50/MWh range this week, as the market has weighed cooler weather forecasts against small signs of progress towards a Ukraine peace deal.

- Front month TTF prices traded between €26.53/MWh and €28.05/MWh this week, compared to €26.535/MWh and €28.055/MWh over the previous week.
- Temperatures in Northwest Europe are expected to fall below normal by Dec. 24, and remain colder-than-normal until the new year.
- Steady gas flows and a forecast for higher wind generation in parts of the region are keeping pressure on further upside.
- LNG flows to Northwest Europe on Dec. 15, 2025 were 250.00 mcm/d, in line with the30-dayy average.
- European gas storage was 69% full on Dec. 15, 2025 vs the 5-yr seasonal norm of 78% for this time of year according to GIE.
- Norwegian nominated flows to the UK and Northwest Europe terminals at 347.60 mcm/d vs 5-day moving average of 347.38 mcm/d according to Gassco.
- Zelensky has ruled out a ceasefire by Christmas, saying Russia is likely to reject a new European-backed peace proposal and that Ukraine must be ready to continue fighting.
- Zelensky described earlier talks with the US as 'very constructive' as the two sides move closer on security guarantees. Territorial concessions remain a major sticking point.
- The US is preparing a fresh round of sanctions on Russia's energy sector, Bloomberg reported on Wednesday, as it looks to increase pressure on Putin if he rejects a peace agreement.

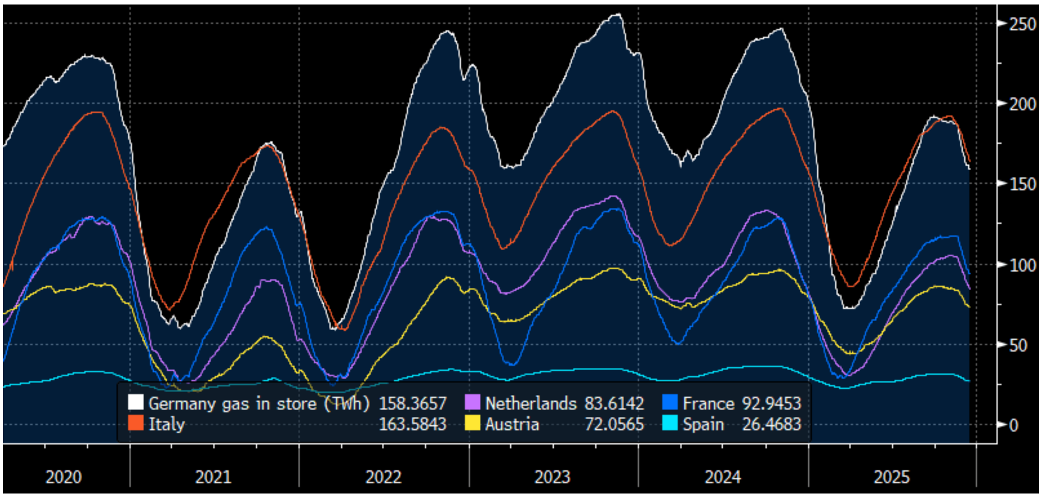
EU Gas Storage Withdrawals Hold Below Normal Amid Mild Weather

Average European gas storage withdrawals from underground facilities have held below normal in the last week with regional demand limited by current mild weather.

- The week to Dec. 14 showed an average net storage withdrawal of 4,604GWh/d compared to withdrawals of 5,239GWh/d the prior week. The previous five-year average for the week shows withdrawals of 5,771GWh/d, based on GIE data.
- European gas storage was down to 69.75% full on Dec. 14, according to GIE data, compared to the previous five-year seasonal average of 78.8% full.

- Based on the withdrawal rates from the last ten years from now until the end of March, the EU storage level would fall to an average of 31% of capacity at the end of the season with a range between 17.3% and 39.9%.
- Storage in Germany is at 158.4Wh (63.1% full), Italy at 163.6TWh (80.5%), Netherlands at 83.6TWh (58%), France at 92.9TWh (73.9%) and Austria at 72.1TWh (71.5%).

European Gas Storage - Source (GIE / Bloomberg Finance L.P.)



NWE Natgas Demand Fell 5% W/W: JPMorgan

Natural gas demand in NWE averaged 629 mcm/d for the week of Dec. 1-7, 5% lower week-on-week and broadly flat year-on-year, according to JPMorgan.

- The weekly decline was driven by a further normalisation of cold weather, with residential demand down by 5% week-on-week.
- All countries in NWE experienced lower demand w/w, led by the Netherlands, where demand fell 13% week-on-week.
- The bank expects overall demand to increase towards a full-month forecast of 646 mcm/d in line with the latest weather forecasts, which call for another cold spell later this month.
- Meanwhile, an 8% slowdown in LNG sendout w/w drove storage withdrawals of 259 mcm/for the week of Dec. 1-7, above the bank's forecast of withdrawals of 189 mcm/d.

TTF Sell-Off Since November 'Overdone': Goldman Sachs

The TTF sell-off since November is 'overdone,' according to Goldman Sachs, which maintains its price forecast of €29/MWh TTF for 2026.

- On the demand side, the negative weather impact on heating demand in December has only offset demand support from what was a very cold late November, Goldman says.
- On the supply side, the bank says NWE gas supplies have missed expectations this winter to date, and especially in December.

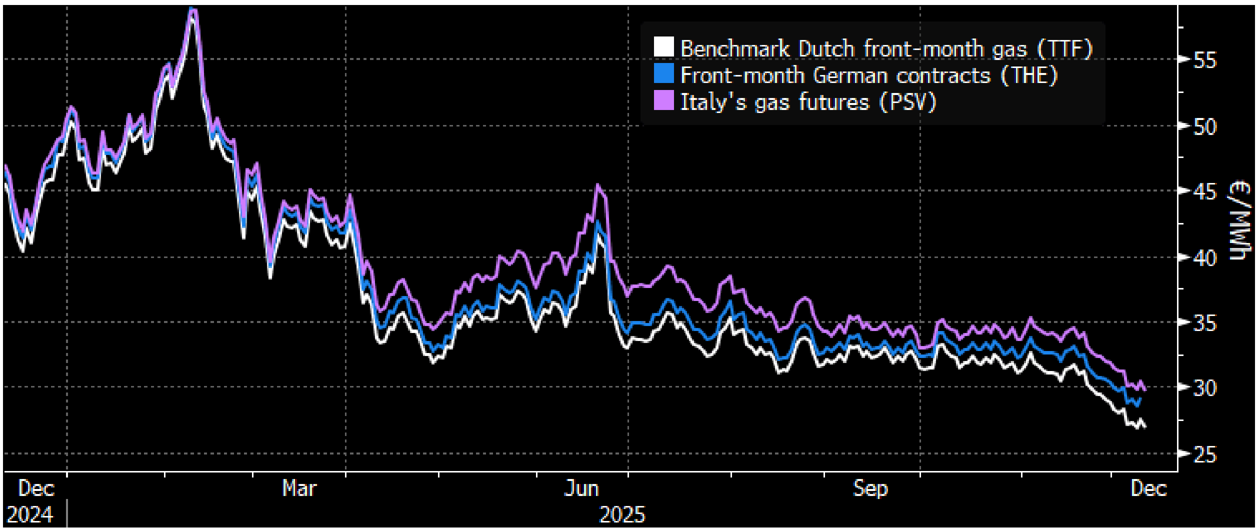
- Month-to-date LNG imports in particular are sequentially lower from November as Asia and Southern Europe imports have picked up.
- Meanwhile, even in a scenario of a Ukraine peace deal, the bank does not expect any immediate meaningful softening of NW European gas balances.
- Goldman sees end-March 2026 gas storage 29% full, vs its previous balance of 35% full.
- As a result, the possibility of congestion in NWE gas storage in the coming summer has fallen.
- However, prices may remain volatile around new Ukraine headlines, Goldman says.
- Should a peace deal be announced, the bank sees European gas prices initially undershooting, before correcting higher to reconnect with fundamentals.

Italian Draft Decree to Align Italy Gas Contracts to TTF Benchmark

A draft Italian decree includes a tool to align Italy's gas contracts with benchmark European prices, to make gas and electricity prices cheaper for end-users, Bloomberg said.

- The government is expected to discuss the plan before the end of the year, although the timing is unclear.
- There is concern about the legality and effectiveness of such a measure which would cut around €1.6 billion off consumers' energy bills.
- Italy sources LNG from the US and Qatar and pipeline gas from Algeria, Azerbaijan and Libya.
- Italian wholesale prices are persistently above TTF and other major Western European prices due to higher gas-transport costs, lower liquidity and grid bottlenecks for renewables, Bloomberg sources said.
- "The latest draft decree calls for regulator ARERA to introduce a liquidity service that would run competitive tenders to choose operators selling fixed daily gas volumes on Italy's spot markets at prices tied to the Amsterdam benchmark, plus an extra charge to manage volatility," Bloomberg said.
- "Chosen operators would receive payments from grid operator Snam SpA, return any revenue earned above their offer price, and inject gas at designated entry points. Excess revenues would be used to lower transport-tariff charges."

TTF-THE-PSV Gas Prices - Source (Bloomberg Finance L.P.)



Possible Natgas Storage Site Closures Could Impact Price Volatility

The flexibility challenge facing European gas and global LNG markets may shift gear in 2026, if some underground gas storage sites in Germany close, according to Argus Media's CEO Adrian Binks.

- 'One or two' large gas storage sites may close in 2026 because the summer-winter gas price spread is shrinking, Binks says.
- Argus forecasts that shuttering the two German sites most at risk of closure would reduce Europe's supply buffer by the equivalent of nearly 60 LNG cargoes per year.
- The closures would increase price volatility and raise the risk of price spikes, particularly in late-winter periods.
- LNG should be able to fill the supply gap, but it is slower to respond to price signals, and Europe potentially has to fend off competition from Asia to secure volumes.

Deutsche ReGas Evaluating Multiple Options for Second FSRU at Mukran

Deutsche ReGas is evaluating multiple options for reinstating a second FSRU at the Mukran terminal, Kpler said.

- Neptune is the only unit currently based at Mukran following the termination of the Energos Power sub-charter earlier this year.
- A potential FSRU is Cape Ann, currently at Le Havre, following France's demobilisation of the unit.
- A competitive tender is currently underway, with confirmation of the installation timing once a final investment decision has been made.
- The terminal saw record feed-in levels of 4.1 TWh in October and 8.35 TWh in November, Kpler said. Gascade data shows Mukran daily inflows averaging 11.54mcm/d since the start of October.
- Deutsche ReGas aims to restore the Mukran terminal's full 13.5 Bcm/year capacity and a two-FSRU configuration by 2027, bolstering German energy security.

ICE Confirms Plan to Launch 22-Hour TTF, German Power Trading

ICE has confirmed that it plans to launch 22-hour TTF, NBP, and German power trading, according to ICIS' Brendan A'Hearn.

- In a press release ICE said that it was "working closely with customers as it prepares to extend trading hours in European Gas and Power Futures and options including TTF, NBP and German Power…"
- The use of the word 'including' could suggest it will be rolled out to a wider set of hubs, with one source telling ICIS that new trading hours would apply to all hubs.
- "Practically it can't be that they close one market while not allowing other markets that trade products as a spread [to TTF]," the source said.
- ICE is expected to issue a circular some time in the early new year, and the changes are to come in to effect from the end of April, sources told ICIS.

European Parliament Formally Approves Sustainability Law Scale Back

The European Parliament gave its formal approval on Tuesday to scale back the EU's corporate sustainability laws, clearing one of the final legal hurdles before the changes can pass into law, Reuters reports.

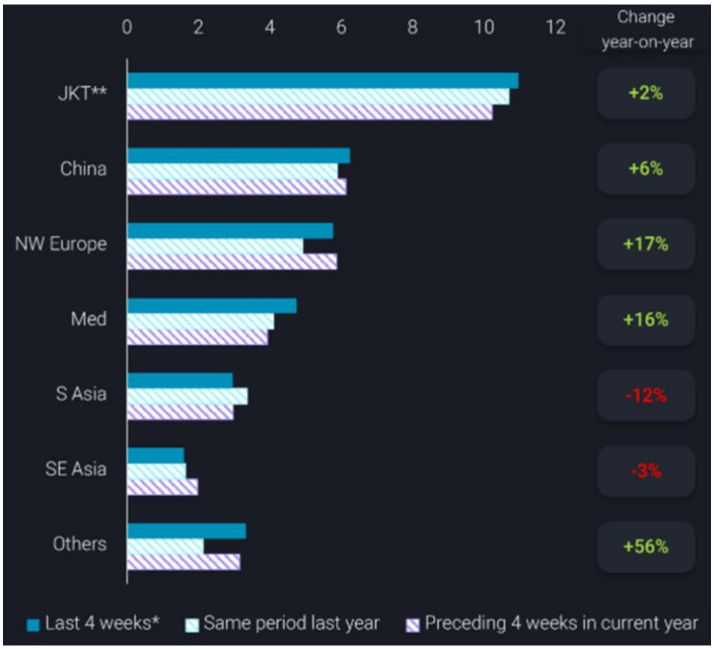
- The European Parliament voted to approve the changes, with 428 lawmakers voting in favour, 218 against and 17 abstentions.
- EU countries will give their final approval to the deal in early 2026, a formality that is expected to wave through the amendments so they can pass into law.
- Key changes reduce the scope of CSRD and CSDDD to larger firms, remove EU-wide civil liability and fines, and require companies only to disclose, not implement, transition plans.
- Qatar and the US had previously warned that EU sustainability laws could hinder LNG trade with Europe.

APAC LNG

North Asia's spot LNG prices are down near the mid $9/MMBtu level with steady supply weighing on prices as demand from key buyers China and Japan remains muted.

- This is the lowest level in more than a year, a move that may spur increased buying from price-sensitive importers, according to traders cited by Bloomberg.
- Regional spot demand remains muted as term contracts, high LNG inventories, and sufficient alternative supplies meet early winter requirements, Vortexa said.
- Last week, aggregate LNG arrivals in Asia reached 5.8m mt across 87 cargoes, remaining flat week-on-week and marking the peak Q4 level so far, Vortexa added.
- The overall regional winter outlook for LNG demand remains subdued, largely due to mild weather conditions, Vortexa said.

LNG Import Flows by Destination (million mt) - Source (Vortexa)

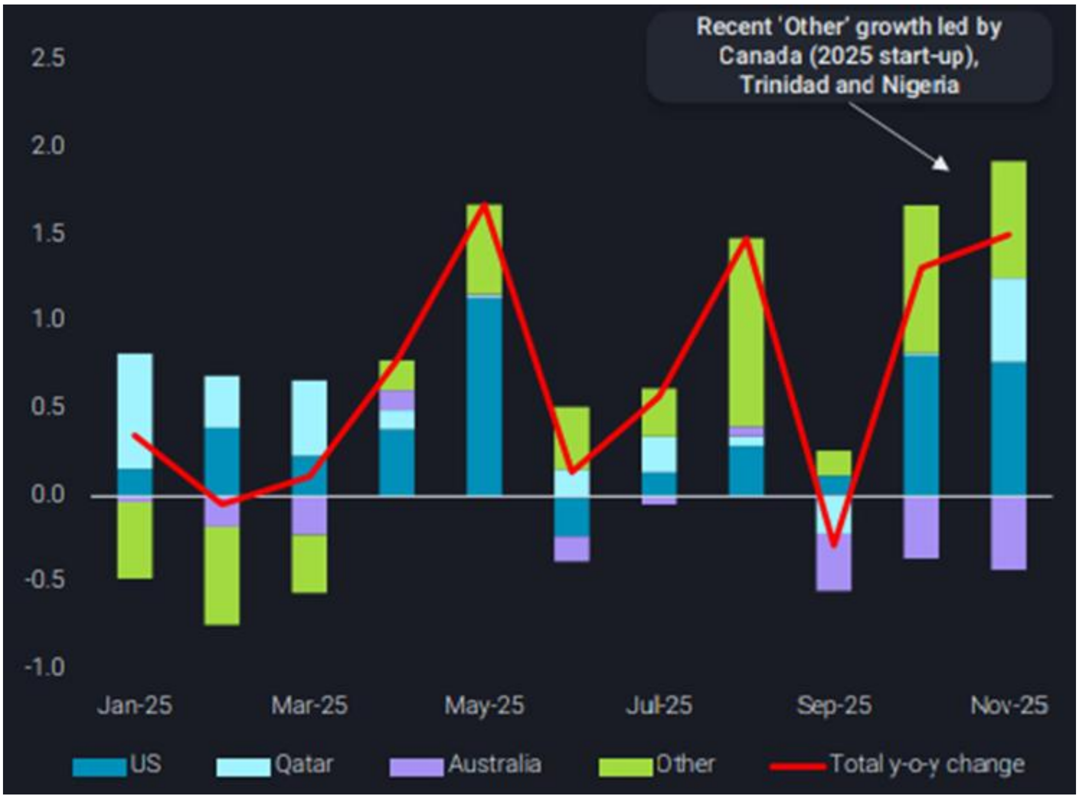


LNG on the Water

LNG volumes on water have risen more than 20% since the end of September, primarily driven by US supply growth as exports hit a record 10.6 mt, rising 39% year-on-year, Vortexa said.

- However, the total estimated quantity of LNG on tankers that have not unloaded for at least 20 days decreased 11% week on week to 3.49m mt as of Dec. 14, according to Bloomberg estimates.
- The volume continues to drop back after rising to the highest since November 2024 at 4.38m mt on Nov. 30. LNG at sea remains 5.9% above the previous seasonal five-year average of around 3.29m mt with volumes on water still supported by US supply growth.
- The estimated volume of LNG on tankers that have not unloaded for at least 30 days is down to 1.39m mt from 1.84m tons a week ago.

LNG on the Water (million mt) - Source (Vortexa)



China

China gas demand is expected to increase by 5% next year and 5.1% annually on average during 2026-30, up from 2.6% in 2025, according to CNPC's Economics & Technology Research Institute.

- Industrial demand is expected to be the largest contributor of gas demand in the next five years but may come under pressure from rising green hydropower from 2030.
- There is significant space for city-gas demand growth in the next 10 years as urbanisation continues.

- Gas power capacity is likely to reach a record this year of over 20 gigawatts, to support demand as it helps balance renewable supply variations. Gas makes up 3.2% in electricity output, well below the global average of 22%.
- LNG trucks to stay cheaper than electric trucks for long-distance transport until at least 2030 while LNG in the shipping sector also has significant potential.

Japan

LNG stockpiles held by Japanese utilities decreased by 1.38% on the week to Dec. 14 to 2.15m mt, according to trade ministry data.

- Japanese companies will be able to exert more control over their LNG joint ventures with state-backed JOGMEC and also recover their investments faster, in moves to boost the nation's energy security, the industry ministry said on Tuesday cited by Reuters.
- Japan's Shizuoka Gas has agreed a seven-year LNG supply contract starting in April 2027, reportedly priced at a high 12% slope to Brent crude, Platts said. The deal, covering around five DES cargoes a year, comes as several of the company's existing term contracts approach expiry. Shizuoka Gas did not comment, though a source confirmed the agreement without disclosing further details.
- Japan Gas Association Chairman Takashi Uchida said the industry is asking the Japanese government to ensure Russian LNG can continue to be procured, Bloomberg said.
- The Japanese government has not informed the group of any updates to the exemption and whether it will be extended, Uchida said.

Australia

Staff working for project contractor Bechtel building the 5 mtpa second train at Australia's 4.9 mtpa Pluto LNG terminal are set to strike from next month, Argus reports.

- The Offshore Alliance (OA) workers' union have provided notice to Bechtel and action starts at 6am local time on Jan. 5, a union spokesman said on Dec. 16.
- A Bechtel spokeswoman said that work on Pluto train 2 continues safely and that Bechtel remains focused on the successful completion of the project.
- Ovintiv has signed a 12-year supply deal with Pembina's under-construction Cedar LNG project on the country's west coast.
- Train 2 of Pluto LNG is due to come online in the second half of 2026, Woodside has said.

Russia's Shadow Fleet

A shadow fleet LNG tanker has abandoned an effort to load fuel from Arctic LNG 2 due to a buildup in ice, Bloomberg reported.

- The Buran tanker headed toward Arctic LNG 2 in late-November. It circled near the Gulf of Ob before heading back toward Murmansk over the weekend.
- As ice thickens during the winter months, travel to and from Arctic LNG 2 becomes more challenging.
- Arctic LNG 2 has exported more than 1m tons of LNG since June but will have to curb deliveries until next summer due to ice buildup.

- Arctic LNG 2 has two operating production trains with a potential combined annual capacity of about 13.2m mt.
- So far, all of the facility's shipments this year have gone into floating storage or to the southern Chinese import terminal of Beihai.

South Asia

An LNG cargo originating from Qatar diverted from Belgium to India last week, according to Bloomberg, amid a drop in European gas prices.

- The Al Kheesah is now on course for Dahej having initially heading toward Zeebrugge, following a U-turn near Somalia last week.
- Importers in India and Bangladesh purchased spot LNG shipments after a recent decline in prices made the fuel more attractive. IOC and BPCL bought late-Jan. shipments at the high-$9/MMBtu range, according to traders cited by Bloomberg.
- Pakistan received 0.2m mt across three cargoes last week, the largest inflow in nearly three months, Vortexa said.

Middle East & Africa

Egypt has at diverted at least two LNG cargoes in early December, easing supply constraints in NWE and helping to push spot prices lower, Platts said.

- Platts data showed that the BW Lesmes, originally bound for Egypt, was redirected to Ravenna in Italy, while the Maran Gas Kimolos also shifted course towards NWE.
- The diversions come as Egypt faces operational delays of 3-5 days in receiving LNG, creating uncertainty over berth and storage availability at its FSRU.
- Despite speculation that domestic demand is weakening, Egypt has tendered for four December cargoes and already imported 430,000 mt in the first 10 days of the month.
- Traders expect price levels between TTF plus 60 cents/MMBtu to $1/MMBtu.
- Meanwhile, another Egyptian-loaded vessel, the Maran Gas Antibes, is heading towards North America, likely Canada, amid stronger weather-driven demand in the region.
- Egyptian LNG imports reached 1.5bcm in November – a record pace for the month according to LSEG tracking. The flows surged due to lower gas imports from Israel's planned maintenance at its Tamar and Leviathan fields. LNG imports at this time of year typically average around 0.6bcm.

Morocco Eyes LNG Terminal

Morocco plans to set up an LNG terminal at a new port on the Mediterranean coast with import capacity of 5bcm/y, according to the Energy Transition and Sustainable Development Ministry cited by Bloomberg.

- Morocco aims for a time charter contract for a floating LNG import terminal moored at Nador West Med port to be commissioned by 2027.
- In the medium-term, Morocco plans to build other LNG terminals on the Atlantic coast.
- A pipeline network is also planned to progressively connect consumption areas, such as power plants and industrial facilities, to import ports and domestic production.

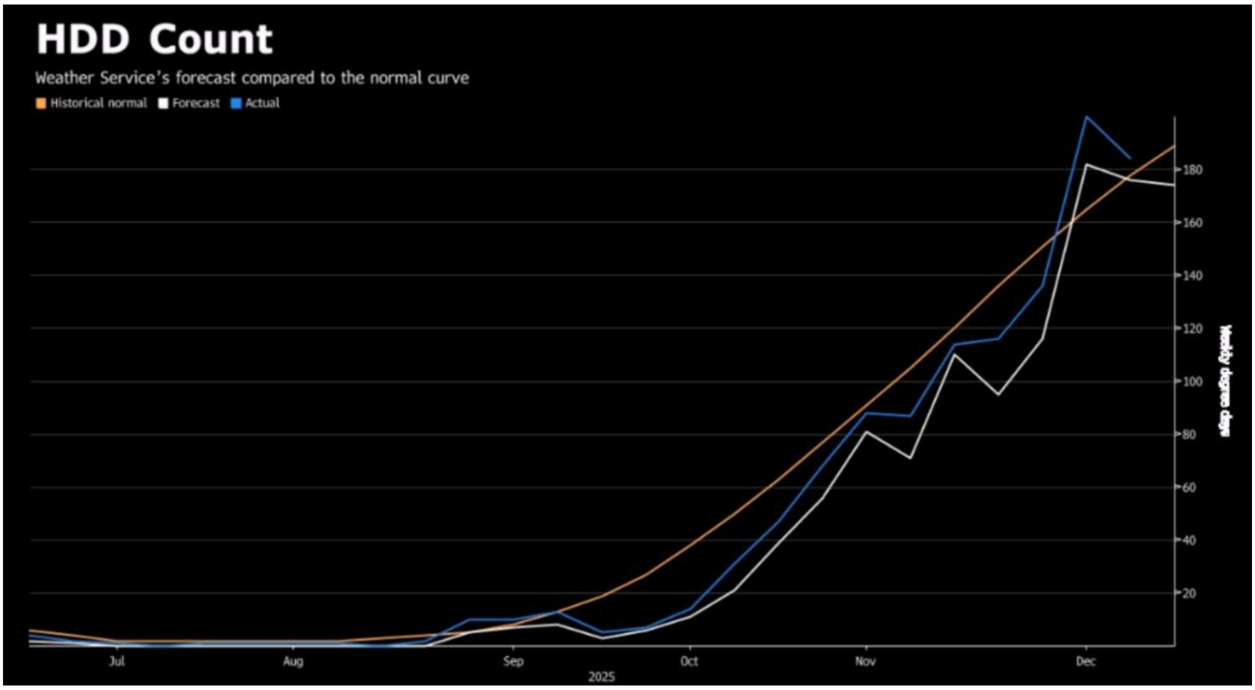
- New pipelines will initially connect Nador West Med port to the Maghreb-Europe pipeline and then extend to industrial zones in Kenitra and Mohammedia.
- The country seeks to meet growing national gas consumption from the current 1.2bcm to 8bcm in 2027 driven by industrial growth and transition to green economy, the North Africa Post said.

US Natural Gas

The JAN 26 Henry Hub contract continued its retreat from a three-year high on Dec. 5 of over $5.50/MMBtu, shedding around $1.50/MMBtu to settle on Dec 16. at $3.95/MMBtu, a seven-week low. Warmer weather is to blame for the correction, as regional basis comes back to earth along the US East Coast. Feedgas demand too has retreated from records just two weeks ago as the two East Coast facilities, Cove Point and Elba Island, were nominated less volumes to keep gas in the US grid.

- Henry Hub Front Month has traded between $3.842/MMBtu and $4.696/MMBtu this week, compared to $4.455/MMBtu and $5.496/MMBtu over the previous week.
- Natural gas deliveries to US LNG terminals averaged 17.43 bcf/d in the seven days to Dec-17, compared to the seven-day average of 18.33 bcf/d during the previous period.
- Baker Hughes US rig count: Gas: 127 (-2).
- US heating demand for the week ending Dec. 20 is forecast to be 13 heating degree days (HDD) below the long-term normal, according to Bloomberg, citing the NOAA. During the week to Dec. 13, the US was 8 HDD above normal.

US HDD Count- Source (Bloomberg Finance L.P./NOAA)

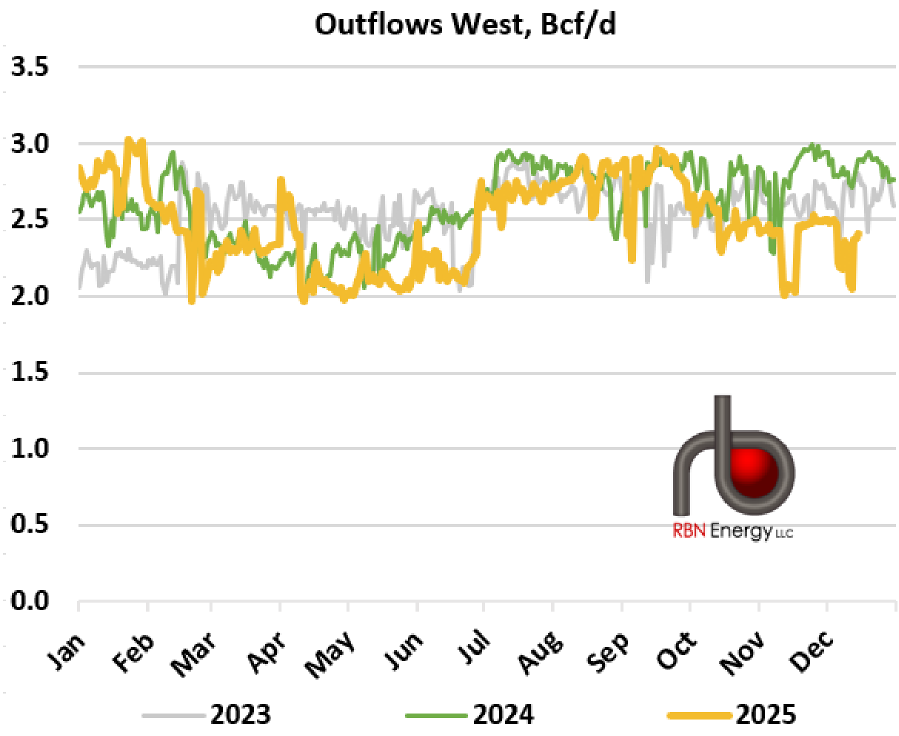


Regional Hubs

Regional benchmark spot prices retreated from the first half of December's highs at Transco Z6 and Algonquin, averaging $17.33/MMBtu on Dec. 12 and $25/MMBtu on Dec. 3 respectively.

- Waha slipped into negative territory again on Dec. 5 and has stayed negative every day since except on Dec. 15. Waha averaged minus 66 cents/MMBtu at the close of business on Dec. 16.
- Outflows to the West out of the Permian are 0.5 Bcf/d below last year's levels. A Dec-3 force majeure at Roswell, NM has taken more western-bound flows offline, as reflected in updated EPNG maintenance schedules throughout the week.

Permian Basin Natural Gas Outflows – Source (RBN Energy LLC)



US LNG

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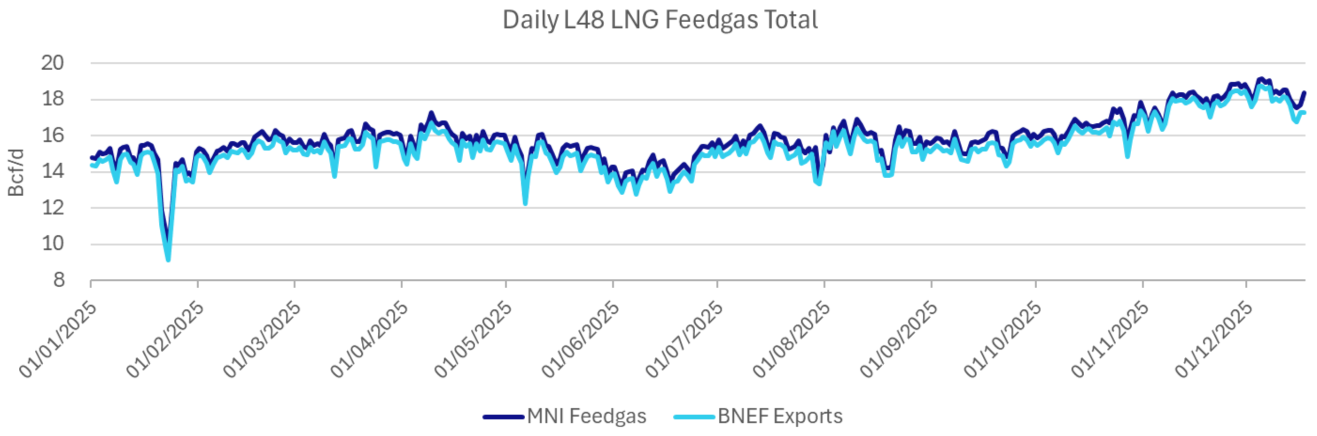
Golden Pass LNG

FERC granted Golden Pass authorization to introduce fuel gas into the Train 1 gas turbine for the mixed refrigerant compressor, the last major step to first LNG production.

- Golden Pass received its cool-down cargo on Dec. 8 from Qatar, and this authorization greenlights the facility to start the cool-down process.
- This is the last major step before first LNG production. Feedgas deliveries to the facility is currently around 180 MMcf/d, up around 90 MMcf/d from the beginning of December.

Daily L48 LNG Feedgas Total- Source (Bloomberg Finance L.P./MNI)



Louisiana LNG

The DOE has extended Woodside's Louisiana LNG's LNG export permit by an additional 44 months, according to Bloomberg.

- LA LNG is already under construction, and the previous export permit was set to begin in May 2026. This would give the company until January 2030 to begin exporting fuel.
- LA LNG has offtake agreements with Williams (1.5 MTPA) and Uniper (1 MTPA).

Tokyo Gas

Tokyo Gas is exploring participation in a US Gulf Coast LNG project while also considering additional LNG purchases from the US, President and CEO Shinichi Sasayama told Platts.

- Options include investing in a liquefaction plant or entering into LNG purchase contracts, depending on favourable conditions.
- The company recently signed a 20-year agreement with Venture Global to buy 1m mtpa from the US starting in 2030.

LNG Canada (Canada)

Power to LNG Canada was allegedly cut off this week causing delays in cargoes leaving LNG Canada, according to a source close to the project telling Kpler on Dec. 15.

- The Diamond Gas Victoria LNG tanker remains berthed at the Shell-operated LNG Canada terminal, three days after arriving on Dec. 12, due to "hiccups during restart activities" following a BC Hydro power outage that may be tied to the outage.
- The tanker is now expected to depart around Dec. 18 or 19, roughly a week after arrival, which is a significant extension compared to the usual two- to three-day time at berth.
- This extended time at the terminal may affect the number of subsequent shipments this month, as the precise loading schedule for ten additional ships will likely shift based on when the vessel leaves.

ST LNG

The DOE has received an application from ST LNG to export about 8.4 MTPA of domestically produced LNG from deepwater port terminal in Texas, according to filings.

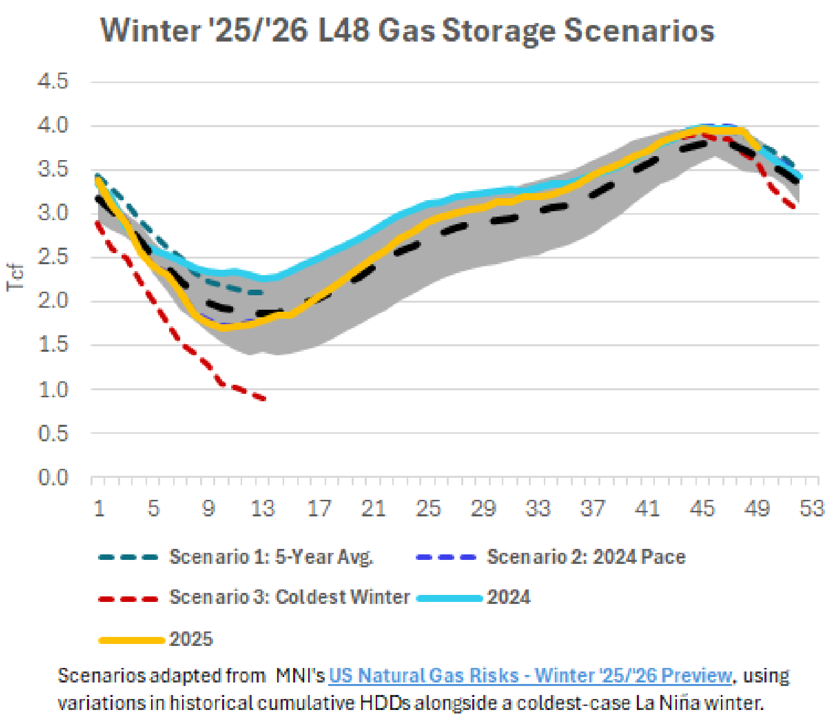
- The facility will be located about 10.4 nautical miles off the coast of Matagorda Texas.
- The project will be built in four identical phases, each capable of producing 2.1 MTPA of LNG and staggered by roughly 18 months for easier construction.
- The facility will require roughly 1.26 of feedgas sourced through a new five-kilometer lateral pipeline connected to Transco's existing offshore system.

US Natgas Inventories

The EIA weekly gas inventories for the week ending Dec. 5 showed a withdrawal of 89 Bcf. The seasonal five-year average shows a net withdrawal of 43 Bcf.

- The Dec. 5 withdrawal of 177 Bcf was above the five-year average of 89 Bcf, which dropped storage to 3,746 Bcf, 103 Bcf above the five-year average of 3,643 Bcf.
- The withdrawal exceeded all survey expectations. With this print, the withdrawal rate for the '25/'26 gas year has exceeded the five-year average but is largely tracking the winter '24/'25 rate.
- The largest draw was from the Midwest at 58 Bcf. The region was hit by extremely cold weather over the past couple of weeks. Storage activity for Week 49 largely mirrored last year's activity across regions.

US Gas Inventories and Storage Scenarios – Source (EIA, MNI)



Latam

Venezuela said it ended all gas supply contracts with Trinidad and Tobago after alleging that the country aided the US seizure of an oil tanker on Dec. 10, according to Vice President Delcy Rodriquez, cited by Bloomberg

- Caracas blames Trinidad and Tobago for a “hostile agenda” and housing US military radar installations.
- At the end of October, Venezuela revoked energy deals with neighbouring Trinidad & Tobago for its “support of a US military offensive” in the Caribbean.
- Trinidad needs Venezuelan gas to replenish supply to the industrial backbone of its fragile economy, Bloomberg said.
- Earlier this year the Trump administration granted Trinidad limited permission to import Venezuelan gas after it had cancelled an earlier approval in April.

Colombia Plans to Boost Gas Supply

Colombia’s energy ministry plans a resolution to boost gas supply that is currently up for comments and includes “transitory” measures, the country’s Energy Ministry said in a statement.

- The ministry seeks to allow gas-fired power plants to sell, through binding contracts, LNG that isn’t needed for electricity generation, Bloomberg said.
- They added that it “promotes the temporary use” of imported LNG in power plants to free up natural gas.
- On Dec. 11, Colombian President Gustavo Petro posted on X saying that “regulations are changing” that will lower gas prices
- The price of local gas will be lowered to replace imported gas, which the country has come to rely on for power generation and industrial uses.
- Colombia’s natural gas reserves are failing to keep pace with domestic demand falling around 13% on the year in 2024. Reserves are forecast to last another 5.9 years at current production rates, the country’s National Hydrocarbons Agency (ANH) said.