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CNG as a competitor to LNG – should the LNG industry be worried?

In any discussion of “stranded gas” – i.e. gas which poses a challenge to commercialise because of its remoteness from markets – one option comes up regularly: namely seaborne CNG (Compressed Natural Gas). But, despite the fact that the first experiments in moving CNG by sea were made back in 1969, CNG projects have remained on the drawing board, and the technologies chosen for commercialising remote gas have been pipeline exports, LNG or petrochemicals. This is not because CNG poses any insuperable technical challenges: CNG-fuelled vehicles are commonplace in many of the world's major cities, and the basic technology of CNG is that of constructing high pressure vessels – something that is technologically sufficiently accessible that its proponents frequently refer to CNG technology as “proven”. What then are the real obstacles to development of seaborne CNG projects, and is CNG poised to pose real competition to LNG and FLNG schemes? In this article LNG Business Review steps outside the narrow world of LNG and asks whether we should be worried about the threat CNG may pose to LNG.



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