The Department of Energy Is Now Calling Fossil Fuels “Molecules of Freedom” and “Freedom Gas”

From now on this is known as a “freedom flame.” (It’s actually a natural gas flare in New Mexico.)

LNG furthers this Administration’s commitment to promoting American energy, American jobs, and the American economy. Further, increased supplies of U.S. natural gas on the world market are critical to advancing clean energy and the energy security of our allies around the globe. With the U.S. in another year of record-setting natural gas production, I am pleased that the Department of Energy is doing what it can to promote an efficient regulatory system that allows for molecules of U.S. freedom to be exported to the world,” said Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy Steven Winberg, who signed the export order.
That’s right. Hydrocarbons shall henceforth be known as “molecules of U.S. freedom.” Proud Americans are fracking compounds of liberty from the glorious shale beds of Texas and shipping it ‘round the world.

Anyway, it gets better. The actual news here is that the Department of Energy gave Houston-based Freeport LNG approval to export gas processed at a new liquefaction plant that the company is set to build at a facility off the coast of Texas. Elsewhere in the government’s press release, U.S. Undersecretary of Energy Mark W. Menezes explains, “Increasing export capacity from the Freeport LNG project is critical to spreading freedom gas throughout the world by giving America’s allies a diverse and affordable source of clean energy.” (Bolds are mine.)

Freedom gas. It appears that turn of phrase originated earlier this month, when Secretary of Energy Rick Perry signed an order aimed at doubling U.S. liquefied natural gas shipments to Europe. At a press briefing in Brussels, he explained that the move would help European nations diversify their energy supply away from Russia, the region’s major supplier of gas. “The United States is again delivering a form of freedom to the European continent,” he said. “And rather than in the form of young American soldiers, it’s in the form of liquefied natural gas.” Afterward, a cheeky reporter from EURACTIV asked whether “freedom gas” would be a correct way to describe the new fuel shipments. “I think you may be correct in your observation,” an apparently inspired Perry responded.

And now it’s the Trump administration’s official line. As one of my colleagues put it, spreading freedom gas sounds like what happens when you’re newly single and suddenly have the apartment to yourself. Which raises the question: Did the Department of Energy mean to make a fart joke in an official statement? Or are we just lucky? The world may never know.