

**Statement by the Network of Communities Affected by
the Fossil Gas and Energy Industry
On the Occasion of Thailand Hosting Gastech 2026**

(14–17 September 2026, BITEC Exhibition and Convention Centre, Bang Na)

The climate crisis is not a crisis without a cause, and those who have contributed to creating it must bear responsibility. Today, the world is entering the era of “Global Boiling,” which means far more than rising temperatures and increasingly severe natural disasters. It is becoming a human rights crisis, a crisis of economic inequality, and an environmental crisis that directly affects people's lives and livelihoods, particularly those of communities and groups that have contributed the least to this crisis yet are forced to bear its impacts most unjustly.

In Thailand, these crises are already visible in increasingly severe flooding, a rising cost of living, and the burden of high electricity bills driven by price volatility in fossil gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG). They are also evident in the impacts on the environment, natural resources, health, and ways of life of communities in areas hosting energy infrastructure and industry. These problems are neither accidental nor merely the result of natural phenomena. They are rooted in decision-making structures and energy policies in which power and benefits are concentrated in the hands of a small minority, while the people and communities who bear the impacts have limited power to determine their own energy future.

Under this structure, a handful of powerful capital groups and economic actors exert outsized influence over the direction of development and public policy, while the economic, social, environmental, and climate costs are shifted onto the public. This reflects the characteristics of an oligarchy, a system in which power and resources are concentrated in the hands of a few. It means that the central question of the energy transition is not merely *what kind of energy Thailand will use*, but *who has the power to decide, who reaps the benefits, and who is made to bear the costs of this energy system*.

Amid these crises, Thailand's hosting of Gastech 2026 from 14 to 17 September 2026 compels us to ask a critical question: Is this platform leading Thailand towards a genuinely just energy transition, or is it creating space for the fossil gas industry to shape the direction and narrative of the country's energy future?

While the energy industry's stage speaks of investment in a new economy, technology, and the future of fossil gas, communities in eastern Thailand are facing the real costs of expanding energy industries and large-scale infrastructure.

These costs cannot be captured by economic figures alone. They include the loss and degradation of the sea, water sources, and farmland, as well as impacts on health and livelihoods, and the erosion of people's right to determine the future of their own homeland.

In Rayong, small-scale fisherfolk have lost more than 1,000 rai of sea area to land reclamation for the Map Ta Phut Industrial Port Development Project, Phase 3. Waters that were once a source of food, livelihoods, and the resources sustaining families from generation to generation have been converted into industrial land. This transformation has affected marine ecosystems and fisherfolk's incomes, while communities continue to live with concerns about air pollution and its impacts on the health of both the present generation and generations to come.

In Chachoengsao, farmers and communities in the Bang Pakong River Basin are confronting the expansion of the Burapha Power fossil gas power plant project and its associated infrastructure, including a 500-kilovolt high-voltage transmission line that cuts across rice fields, mango orchards, and residential areas. Communities have raised concerns about the thoroughness of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, particularly its assessment of water-use impacts and air pollution, including secondary particulate matter that contributes to PM2.5 pollution. They have also raised concerns about a participation process that lacks transparency and fails to provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to participate in decision-making. Local people are deeply concerned about the industrial sector's growing demand for water. The community therefore raises a critical observation that water from the Bang Pakong Basin must be allocated with consideration for the rights of people and farmers to access water, as well as the determination of local people to participate meaningfully based on the principle of community rights.

In Prachinburi, the Prachinburi Khemkhaeng Network and residents have come together to protect their natural resources, health, and community ways of life, taking a clear stand against the inclusion of Prachinburi province within the area governed by the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Act. They also question the expansion of fossil energy projects, industrial waste-to-energy power plants, and factories engaged in industrial waste management and disposal, as well as the growth of investment from Chinese capital that may lack adequate environmental governance and accountability. These developments could add to the province's pollution burden and create risks for water sources, agricultural land, and organic farming communities. At the same time, environmental rights defenders who have stood up to protect clean air, clean water, and farmland have faced intimidation and harassment, both outside the justice system and through the misuse of legal

processes in the form of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs). This creates pressure and further restricts the space for people to exercise their rights and freedoms in defence of their communities and homeland.

People across eastern Thailand are echoing the same question: who benefits from this development, and who is being forced to shoulder the costs and risks of the fossil fuel industry? When the sea is converted into industrial estates, organic farmland is taken over for infrastructure, water sources are appropriated, and people who stand up to defend their rights face the risk of legal action, intimidation, and harassment, energy development of this kind cannot be called a “just transition.” Not while the voices, rights, and lives of communities are treated as less important than economic interests and the expansion of energy capital groups. This is the reality of Thai society: the benefits and profits of energy development are concentrated among capital groups, while people and communities pay the price through impacts on their health, natural resources, farmland, and ways of life. Fossil gas projects are routinely justified in the name of “energy security.” Yet the public continues to shoulder electricity bills inflated by a power system burdened with excess generating capacity and availability payments, while dependence on fossil gas and LNG, whose prices fluctuate with global markets, only deepens the country's energy *insecurity*. Calling fossil gas a “transition fuel” therefore cannot serve as a pretext for binding Thailand to long-term gas purchase contracts, expanding LNG ports and infrastructure, adding more fossil gas power plants under the draft Power Development Plan (PDP 2026), or pursuing a strategy to become a regional LNG hub. These measures risk trapping Thailand in a “fossil trap” for decades to come and obstructing the transition to a clean, just, and renewable energy system for future generations.

At the same time, under the narrative of a “new economy,” Thailand is racing to attract investment in data centres and artificial intelligence (AI), industries that consume enormous amounts of electricity and water, particularly in the eastern region, which has long borne the burden of heavy industry and mega-infrastructure. We do not reject technology. What we reject is a model of development that appropriates resources from communities and uses the energy demands of data centres and AI as a pretext for building more gas power plants, LNG terminals, and fossil fuel infrastructure. These projects and policies must undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that comprehensively considers their impacts on natural resources, the environment, health, quality of life, and people's rights. Otherwise, what is being called a “new economy” may prove to be nothing more than a new wave of burdens that communities are forced to bear.

The same holds as Thailand opens its doors to the global fossil gas industry through Gastech 2026, a platform promoting false solutions to the global boiling

crisis, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), carbon credits, ammonia, and hydrogen, as pathways to Net Zero emissions. This compels us to ask: is the Net Zero goal genuinely driving the reduction and phase-out of fossil fuel dependence, or is it being used as a pretext to prolong the life of the fossil fuel industry through a narrative of greenwashing that claims greenhouse gas emissions can simply be offset or managed away? We therefore ask: who truly has the right to determine this country's energy future, and who is bearing the consequences of the energy future being chosen today? So long as fisherfolk from Rayong and farmers from Chachoengsao and Prachinburi who defend their homelands do not have an equal voice and meaningful power in decision-making, we cannot accept an energy future in which the benefits accrue to a privileged few while the costs to health, the environment, and people's ways of life are shifted onto the public.

Demands and Policy Recommendations to the Thai Government, the Ministry of Energy, State Agencies, Energy Businesses, and Financial Institutions at Gastech 2026

1. Stop expanding fossil gas and its related infrastructure; accelerate the transition to just renewable energy. The Thai government and relevant agencies must stop investing in fossil gas projects and related infrastructure, and thoroughly review projects under development to reduce dependence on and imports of liquefied fossil gas (LNG), including the strategy to be an ASEAN LNG Hub. Moreover, existing fossil gas power plants should be transitioned to serve solely as balancing services during the energy transition, while clean and just renewable energy must be accelerated as the main power source for the national electrical grid.

2. End greenwashing and false solutions to the global boiling crisis by genuinely cutting greenhouse gas emissions at the source. The government and all relevant agencies must end the use of technologies and mechanisms such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), hydrogen, ammonia, and carbon offsetting, which are false solutions to the global boiling crisis that create the appearance of climate action while enabling the expansion or prolongation of fossil fuel use. Instead, they must adopt binding measures that require the fossil fuel industry to genuinely reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the source and throughout the entire supply chain. They must also require financial institutions to end all financing and other forms of support for projects that expand or prolong the use of fossil fuels.

3. Reform the Power Development Plan (PDP) process to be people-centred, transparent, and aligned with the 1.5°C goal under the Paris Agreement. The government and all relevant agencies must reform the process for drafting Thailand's Power Development Plan (PDP) to ensure transparency and meaningful

participation by the public and all stakeholders. The country's energy policy and planning must be grounded in reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the source and aligned to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, in line with the Paris Agreement. The process must also include safeguards against conflicts of interest and corporate capture, including the undue influence of energy business interests over public policymaking.

4. Make Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) a mandatory precondition for setting any direction of development (Mandatory SEA Before Development). The government and all relevant agencies must strengthen Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by making it legally binding for the formulation of policies, master plans, and development projects that may affect the environment, natural resources, and communities. SEA must comprehensively assess area-based, issue-specific, and cumulative impacts and guarantee meaningful participation by the public and potentially affected communities. It must cover development across all resource-intensive sectors, including energy master plans, data center construction, industry, resource management and mining, as well as large-scale infrastructure.

5. Strengthen investment governance, hold businesses accountable for human rights and the environment, and protect civic space for the exercise of rights and freedom of expression. The government and regulatory agencies must require businesses and financial institutions to comply with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) under the “Protect, Respect and Remedy” framework. Businesses must also be required to provide financial assurance for environmental restoration and for remedying any loss and damage that may occur, with meaningful participation by the public and affected communities in decision-making processes. In addition, the state must urgently enact Anti-SLAPP legislation to protect people, communities, and human rights defenders from intimidation, harassment, and the misuse of judicial processes to silence public participation and criticism on matters of public interest.

The Thai Government must stop enabling the fossil fuel industry to use Thailand as a platform to advance new deals and investments that would lock Thailand and the world into fossil fuels for decades to come and further intensify the global climate crisis through its hosting of Gastech 2026. The Government must not use this platform to promote, approve, or legitimize fossil fuel industry expansion, nor allow the industry to evade accountability for the climate crisis. Instead, it must demonstrate a clear commitment to climate justice and demand that major polluters be held accountable for the loss and damage they have caused.

Civil society calls on the Thai Government to reconsider its position on a just energy transition and its role as a principal host alongside major fossil fuel industry actors at the 54th Gastech Conference. The Government must choose to stand with people, communities, and those already experiencing loss and damage from the climate crisis. Thailand must pursue a future in which polluters are held accountable, affected communities receive justice, and the country transitions towards a clean, just, and people-centred renewable energy system.