

NAJAS Pre-Panel Briefing Memo

U.S.–Japan Energy Cooperation in Louisiana

Five Anchor Projects + Federal-Level Tailwinds Linking the Gulf Coast, Tennessee, and Ohio

From:	Miki Fukuda (Research Associate, NAJAS)
Date:	5/19/2026
Re:	U.S.–Japan Energy Cooperation in Louisiana — Pre-Panel Briefing for NAJAS Network Conference (July 29–31, 2026, New Orleans)
Purpose:	Background briefing for the panel moderator (Jane Nakano, CSIS) and panelists ahead of the planning meeting at NAJAS

Conference Framing

The text below — circulated on LinkedIn ahead of the conference — sets the strategic frame for the Louisiana panel: JERA Americas as Premier Sponsor, the state's role as the “frontline of American energy,” and a cluster of U.S.–Japan projects spanning LNG, ammonia, lithium-ion battery materials, and small modular reactors that fall under the umbrella of the \$550B U.S.–Japan trade deal facility.

LinkedIn announcement — NAJAS 2026 Network Conference (excerpted in full):

NAJAS is thrilled to hold our Network conference alongside JERA Americas as 2026 Premier Sponsor, and on the frontline of American energy — Louisiana's oil, gas, ammonia, hydrogen, petrochemical and export “patches.” Members will surely want to follow this 3-part series which chronicles Japan's energy supply and how it is evolving — or gyrating, with 95% of the country's oil transiting MidEast routes, and U.S.–Japan and North America–Japan crude shipments now ramping up. While Discovery Channel subscribers may not be able to stream the programs in the States, CEO John O'Brien, Jr. has us covered with a YouTube option.

Courtesy of 98-year-strong, all-volunteer Japan Society of New Orleans we'll bring together almost 40 independent non-profit members and many kindred partners dedicated to solid U.S.–Japan ties over July 29–31.

We look forward to learning more about all aspects of the “other Gulf” energy scene and JERA's impressive strides in new energy, as it looks to 0-emissions thermal plants in under 25 years — as a bridge to the renewables destination it holds as overarching goal (see also, JERA Nex). The firm was already one of the world's largest LNG buyers with stakes also in a Texas export terminal and 10 U.S. power generators, when it sharply expanded off-take contracts last June and, then, in October, acquired huge gas resources in the southeastern reaches of the famed Louisiana–Texas Haynesville shale formation.

The next phase of the energy abundance and responsible transition strategy involves the Blue Point Complex about 90 minutes from NOLA, half-way to Lafayette, LA. When completed, the facility will produce 1.6 million tons of “blue ammonia,” capturing more than 95% of the carbon dioxide emissions from the plant, according to lead owner of the complex, Illinois-based CF Industries, which has partnered with JERA and Mitsui & Co. on the \$4 billion project.

And there is more cooking on U.S.–Japan energy and security alignment. We look forward to hearing about an important, though tariff-challenged, LiOn plant just outside of New Orleans, and further afield, the small nuclear reactor series being lined up amongst GE Vernova Hitachi Nuclear Energy and Tennessee Valley Authority under the \$550B loan and investment facility that accompanied the U.S.–Japan trade deal of last year. #JapanAmericansWorking

At a Glance — Why Louisiana Matters

Louisiana sits at the structural center of U.S.–Japan energy cooperation in 2026 for three reasons.

- ▶ **First**, the state hosts the densest concentration of LNG export terminals on the U.S. Gulf Coast and adjoins the Haynesville Shale, where Japanese trading houses have moved upstream — most recently through Mitsubishi Corporation's \$5.2B acquisition of Aethon, the largest M&A deal in the company's history.¹
- ▶ **Second**, Louisiana is now the build site for the world's largest single low-carbon ammonia project (Blue Point, with JERA and Mitsui as equity partners) and for the UBE electrolyte facility supplying North American EV batteries.²³
- ▶ **Third**, Japanese government certification under the ¥3 trillion price-gap subsidy now links Louisiana-origin low-carbon fuels directly to demand in Japan, anchoring the supply chain on both ends.⁴

Two further projects — outside Louisiana but inside the same trade-deal architecture — are included because panelists will hear them invoked alongside Louisiana: the GE Vernova Hitachi BWRX-300 SMR at the Clinch River site in Tennessee, and the DOE–SoftBank–AEP Ohio partnership announced in March 2026 for a 10 GW data-center campus on former DOE land in Pike County, Ohio.⁵⁶

Five Projects at a Glance

Project	Location	Japanese Partner(s)	Scale	Stage
Cameron LNG & Haynesville Shale	Cameron Parish & W. Louisiana	Mitsubishi Corp., Mitsui & Co., Tokyo Gas, Toho Gas, NYK Line	~12 Mt/y liquefaction; ~2.1 Bcf/d upstream gas (Aethon)	Operating + Phase 2 expansion; Aethon close FY1Q26
Blue Point Low-Carbon Ammonia	Ascension Parish, LA (~90 min from NOLA)	JERA (35%), Mitsui & Co. (25%)	\$4B; ~1.4–1.6 Mt/y NH ₃ ; ~2.3 Mt/y CO ₂ sequestration	FID stage; production targeted ~2029
UBE C1 Chemicals — EV Electrolyte Plant	Jefferson Parish, LA (near NOLA)	UBE Corporation (lead); local: HYCO1 (syngas)	~\$500M; lithium-ion electrolyte & precursor materials	Under construction; tariff-exposed
BWRX-300 SMR (GE Vernova Hitachi)	Clinch River site, Oak Ridge, TN	Hitachi (via GVH JV with GE Vernova)	300 MWe per unit; \$400M DOE grant secured	NRC review; site prep as early as 2026
DOE–SoftBank–AEP Ohio Partnership	Portsmouth Site, Pike County, OH	SoftBank Group / SB Energy	~\$37.5B; 10 GW power (9.2 GW gas) + 10 GW data center	Announced Mar 2026; construction starts 2026

¹ <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/ja/news/release/2026/20260116001.html>

² <https://www.cfindustries.com/newsroom/2025/blue-point-joint-venture>

³ <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/news/japanese-chemical-company-ube-announces-500-million-investment-to-build-louisiana-facility-to-serve-growing-ev-battery-market>

⁴ <https://www.spglobal.com/energy/en/news-research/latest-news/energy-transition/121925-japan-certifies-jera--mitsui-led-ammonia-projects-under-yen-3-trillion-price-gap-subsidy>

⁵ <https://www.gevernova.com/nuclear/carbon-free-power/bwrx-300-small-modular-reactor>

⁶ <https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-partnership-ensure-affordable-energy-and-power-americas-ai>

1. Cameron LNG and the Haynesville Shale

Location	Cameron LNG: Hackberry, Cameron Parish, Louisiana. Haynesville Shale: eastern Texas through western Louisiana, with strong pipeline connectivity to Gulf Coast export terminals.
Lead operator	Sempra Infrastructure (Cameron LNG). Aethon (upstream gas) is being acquired by Mitsubishi Corporation.
Japanese stakes	Mitsubishi Corp.: equity in Cameron LNG via Japan LNG Investment (JLI, JV with NYK Line); offtake equivalent to ~1 of 3 trains (~4 Mt/y). Mitsui & Co.: equity in Cameron LNG; ~4 Mt/y capacity; arranged 7 LNG carriers and JBIC/NEXI-backed project finance. Tokyo Gas: ~720,000 t/y under long-term Henry Hub–linked SPA. Toho Gas: ~300,000 t/y under 20-year contract via Mitsui & Co.
Scale	Cameron LNG total liquefaction capacity ~12 Mt/y across multiple trains. The Aethon acquisition (announced 1/16/2026, USD 5.2B equity + ~USD 2.33B assumed debt) adds ~2.1 Bcf/d of net upstream gas — roughly 15 Mt/y on an LNG-equivalent basis. ⁷⁸
Decarbonization layer	Cameron LNG hosts the Hackberry Carbon Sequestration (HCS) CCS hub — Sempra operates; TotalEnergies, Mitsui, and Mitsubishi (JLI) hold a participation agreement. Indicated maximum storage ~2 Mt/y CO ₂ , intended to anchor “low-carbon LNG”. ⁹
What to listen for	How Aethon's gas will be physically routed to Cameron LNG (and other Gulf terminals); how CCS economics interact with 45Q; Phase 2 expansion status; e-methane and bio-LNG demonstration tracks with Tokyo Gas.

2. Blue Point Low-Carbon Ammonia Complex

Location	Ascension Parish, Louisiana — approximately 90 minutes from New Orleans, halfway to Lafayette, on the Mississippi River industrial corridor.
Ownership	CF Industries (Illinois-based; project developer & operator) — 40% equity. JERA — 35% equity (also the principal demand-side offtaker in Japan). Mitsui & Co. — 25% equity (investment execution stage). 1PointFive (Occidental subsidiary): geological CO ₂ sequestration. Linde: industrial gas supply under commercial contract.
Scale	Total project value approximately \$4 billion. Planned production of approximately 1.4 million tons/year of low-carbon ammonia, with design capacity for ~2.3 Mt/y of underground CO ₂ sequestration. CF Industries cites a >95% emissions-capture rate at the plant level. The Andy O'Brien LinkedIn announcement above references the 1.6 Mt/y figure for the completed complex. ¹⁰
Status	Engineering and preparation underway; production targeted around 2029. Certified by Japan's METI under the ¥3 trillion price-gap subsidy program (December 2025), establishing the Japan-bound demand leg of the supply chain. ¹¹

⁷ <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/ja/news/release/2026/20260116001.html>

⁸ <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOUC1636B0W6A110C2000000/>

⁹ <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/en/news/release/2024/0000053601.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.cfindustries.com/newsroom/2025/blue-point-joint-venture>

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<https://www.spglobal.com/energy/en/news-research/latest-news/energy-transition/121925-japan-certifies-jera--mitsui-led-ammonia-projects-under-yen-3-trillion-price-gap-subsidy>

Strategic logic	Blue Point sits at the intersection of three trends: U.S. low-cost feedstock gas, Louisiana's existing ammonia logistics (export terminals on the Mississippi), and Japanese demand for low-carbon fuels for thermal-power co-firing. State-level support comes from Louisiana Economic Development.
What to listen for	Whether CF Industries will price ammonia under index-linked or fixed long-term mechanisms; CO2 sequestration well permitting timelines under Louisiana's Class VI primacy; ship-loading and ammonia-carrier vessel readiness.

3. UBE C1 Chemicals — EV Electrolyte Plant

Location	Jefferson Parish, Louisiana — adjacent to New Orleans, leveraging Mississippi River and Gulf Coast port infrastructure.
Lead investor	UBE Corporation (Japan) — chemicals firm; the project is the firm's flagship North American manufacturing investment. Local partner: HYCO1 , a U.S. syngas-technology provider that supplies feedstock for electrolyte and precursor production. ¹²
Scale	Approximately \$500 million capital commitment; capacity to produce dimethyl carbonate (DMC) and ethyl methyl carbonate (EMC) — core solvents for lithium-ion battery electrolyte — to supply the North American EV battery industry. ^{13,14}
Policy context	Project was sited explicitly to capture IRA-era preferences for North American manufacturing. The Andy O'Brien LinkedIn announcement above flags the project as “tariff-challenged,” reflecting current trade-policy headwinds that affect battery supply chains.
State support	Louisiana Economic Development (state) led incentive packaging and site coordination.
What to listen for	Which downstream battery-cell manufacturers will pull UBE's electrolyte; how 2025–26 tariff measures on Chinese battery materials reshape pricing; whether UBE will pursue a second plant or expansion.

4. BWRX-300 Small Modular Reactor — Clinch River, Tennessee

Location	Clinch River site, near Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The site is operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which holds an early site permit for SMRs at the location.
Technology / Vendor	GE Vernova Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GVH) — a joint venture between Japan's Hitachi, Ltd. and U.S.-based GE Vernova. The BWRX-300 is a 300 MWe water-cooled, natural-circulation SMR with passive safety systems, leveraging the design and licensing basis of the ESBWR. ¹⁵
U.S. lead	Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). TVA submitted its construction permit application to the NRC in May 2025 — the first BWRX-300 application in the

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<https://hyco1.com/hyco1-celebrates-groundbreaking-as-syngas-technology-provider-for-ube-corporations-new-ev-electrolyte-plant-in-new-orleans/>

¹³

<https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/news/japanese-chemical-company-ube-announces-500-million-investment-to-build-louisiana-facility-to-serve-growing-ev-battery-market>

¹⁴ <https://www.ube.com/c1chemicals/>

¹⁵ <https://www.gevernova.com/nuclear/carbon-free-power/bwrx-300-small-modular-reactor>

	United States. NRC review is expected to take approximately 17 months. ¹⁶
Federal support	The U.S. Department of Energy awarded TVA a \$400 million grant in late 2025 to accelerate the project. ¹⁷ A separate \$800 million coalition-led grant application is also being pursued.
Trade-deal link	The LinkedIn announcement above ties the SMR series explicitly to the \$550 billion loan and investment facility that accompanied the U.S.–Japan trade deal of 2025. Industry coverage continues to treat the BWRX-300 series and adjacent SMR investments as flagship deliverables under that facility.
Schedule	Preliminary site preparation could begin as early as 2026, per TVA. The BWRX-300 platform is also being deployed at OPG's Darlington site in Ontario (construction phase approved, completion targeted by 2030) — providing an international reference point for the U.S. project. ¹⁸
What to listen for	How TVA's BWRX-300 deployment will be financed; coalition partners (utilities + supply chain); implications for AI-driven baseload demand; relevance to New Orleans as a distributed-power play given hurricane risk.

5. DOE–SoftBank–AEP Ohio Partnership

Location	Portsmouth Site, Pike County, Southern Ohio — federal land previously operated by the U.S. Department of Energy.
Partners	U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) with SoftBank Group / SB Energy (Japan; the financing and project-development partner) and AEP Ohio (local utility, responsible for transmission upgrades).
Scale	Approximately \$37.5 billion public-private initiative. SB Energy plans to build 10 gigawatts of new power generation — including at least 9.2 GW of natural gas generation — to power a co-located 10 GW data-center development. SB Energy is investing approximately \$4.2 billion with AEP Ohio to upgrade and build new transmission lines. ^{19,20}
Announced	March 2026. Construction is expected to begin in 2026.
Trade-deal link	DOC Secretary Howard Lutnick framed the partnership as a direct outcome of the \$550 billion Japan investment commitment under the 2025 U.S.–Japan trade deal. The project is structured under President Trump's Ratepayer Protection Pledge so that infrastructure costs are not passed to consumers. ²¹
Why it matters for the Louisiana panel	The Ohio deal sits in the same architecture as the Louisiana investments (Aethon, Blue Point, UBE, the TVA SMR series), but represents the data-center / AI-power axis rather than the export / decarbonization axis. Panelists are likely to use Ohio as a counterpoint when discussing where Japanese capital is being deployed under the trade-deal facility, and the gas-fired generation component connects upstream to the same Haynesville supply.

¹⁶ <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/tva-submits-first-us-bwrx-300-construction-application>

¹⁷ <https://www.gevernova.com/news/press-releases/us-department-energy-announces-400-million-funding-accelerate-deployment-nation-first-commercial-small-modular-nuclear-reactor>

¹⁸ <https://www.gevernova.com/nuclear/carbon-free-power/bwrx-300-small-modular-reactor>

¹⁹ <https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-partnership-ensure-affordable-energy-and-power-americas-ai>

²⁰ <https://www.energy.gov/articles/fact-sheet-department-energy-ensuring-affordable-energy-access-ohio-while-powering-future>

²¹ <https://www.energy.gov/articles/fact-sheet-department-energy-ensuring-affordable-energy-access-ohio-while-powering-future>