

THE NAMIBIAN · NAMIBIA

Namibia petroleum bill clears first vote with NEFF backing

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Namibia's petroleum exploration and production amendment bill has passed its first parliamentary hurdle, advancing to the committee stage after NEFF — the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters — broke with other opposition parties to vote alongside the ruling Swapo in favour of the bill's progression. NEFF was the only opposition party to support the move, a politically significant alignment that signals the bill carries cross-party momentum despite broader opposition resistance.

NEFF justified its position on the grounds that Namibia's political independence must be matched by genuine economic control over its natural resources. The party framed its support as a principled stance rather than a concession to the ruling party, arguing that sovereignty over petroleum assets is inseparable from the national interest. The statement, released following Tuesday's vote, was explicitly defensive in tone — suggesting the party anticipated criticism from within opposition ranks for its position.

The bill's content, as reported, centres on amendments to the legal framework governing petroleum exploration and production in Namibia. While the specific provisions have not been detailed in this report, the legislative push comes at a time when Namibia is preparing to develop significant offshore oil discoveries — most notably in the Orange Basin — and is working to ensure its regulatory architecture is fit for purpose ahead of expected first-oil timelines later this decade. The committee stage will now allow for detailed scrutiny, potential amendments, and stakeholder submissions before any further votes.

For the international energy industry, the passage of enabling legislation is a critical prerequisite for licensing, contracting, and project sanctioning. A strengthened or revised petroleum law could affect the terms under which international operators and service companies engage with Namibian upstream assets. Depending on the bill's final provisions, it may touch on local content requirements, fiscal terms, or the powers of the national petroleum authority — all factors that shape the commercial environment for foreign participants.

The political dynamic here is worth noting: NEFF's stated rationale around economic sovereignty suggests the bill may include provisions that increase state or local participation in petroleum activities. If so, international operators and their service-company supply chains may need to factor revised local-content or ownership structures into their project planning. The committee stage is the point at which the industry should be engaging — either directly or through operator relationships — to understand and, where appropriate, inform the final shape of the legislation.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This bill is at an early legislative stage — committee review — so direct procurement outreach is premature. Norwegian service companies with exposure to Namibia's Orange Basin developments should monitor the bill's committee-stage proceedings closely, as final provisions on local content or licensing terms could directly affect project economics and contracting structures. Relationship-building with operators active in Namibia, and engagement through industry bodies, is the appropriate action at this point.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Operators developing Orange Basin assets will need regulatory clarity before sanctioning infrastructure contracts — track bill provisions that could affect licensing or ownership terms for FPSO and subsea scopes.
- **Drilling:** Any local-content provisions in the final bill may set thresholds for rig crew or services sourcing; monitor closely to assess compliance requirements for future drilling campaigns.

- **Well Services:** Revised petroleum legislation could introduce new licensing or certification requirements for service companies operating in-country; engage with operators now to understand emerging compliance expectations.
- **Pipeline:** If the bill strengthens state participation rights, future gas or condensate pipeline infrastructure may involve national company co-ownership structures that affect project tendering and contracting.

[Original source: The Namibian →](#)

Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

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