

March 11, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for standing up to misinformation from the oil and gas industry and correcting the record to show that your administration is not waging a war on oil and gas. Rather, companies are trying to capitalize on the tragic situation in Ukraine to their benefit. As you outlined in your speech on Tuesday, oil and gas companies should not take this opportunity to boost their record profits even further through profiteering and price gouging at the expense of American families.

While oil executives hoard [unused drilling permits](#) and post [record profits](#), their lobbyists and allies in Congress are scrambling to point the finger at everyone else for the pain high energy prices are causing American families. Industry lobbyists are even leveraging fear and anxiety about Russia invading Ukraine to try to take even more money out of Americans' pockets, and dole it out to oil executives and their wealthy investors. The last thing that our communities need is for politicians in Washington to help oil lobbyists exploit this crisis and hastily get their hands on even more of our world-class public lands for pennies on the dollar – at the expense of people across the country.

Contrary to industry claims, there is no evidence that more leasing or increased production on public lands would lower gas prices or heating bills, according to a [new analysis from Accountable.US](#). And according to a recent [Taxpayers for Common Sense](#) analysis, the oil industry does not need any more handouts, as it already enjoys an estimated \$3.1 billion through preferential tax treatment and \$1.7 billion through sweetheart terms in the oil and gas leasing system each year.

In fact, domestic oil production has actually [increased](#), nearing record highs. While troubling to our organizations, our members, our partners, and communities living in the shadow of development, it also shows the industry's claims are baseless and self-serving. Production has increased 26 percent between the start of 2016 and the end of 2021, [averaging](#) well over 11 million barrels per day in 2022, and is [expected](#) to reach record levels in the coming months. That means that the United States is producing more than twice as many barrels of oil per day as it produced in 2008. We need to change this course immediately to protect our communities and to avoid the worst impacts of a changing climate.

Yet, despite these robust domestic production numbers, gasoline prices remain high – and so do oil executives' profits. Retail gasoline prices and home heating costs have always gone up and down, unaffected by the energy policies enacted during any presidential term, and regardless of the amount of oil and gas produced on public lands or the number of federal leases and permits issued. Meanwhile, oil companies like Chevron and Exxon are posting their highest profits in nearly a decade. Shares in oil companies are on average about 20 percent higher than they were a year ago.

The points you made in your speech are critically important: oil companies are sitting on 13.9 million acres of unused leases, have stockpiled [9,100 unused drilling permits](#) to drill on public lands, and they are using the crisis in Ukraine to demand more. Clearly, the oil industry [has chosen not to develop the resources it has already taken from us and is instead prioritizing shareholder returns](#).

Oil companies want to keep us dependent on them so they can keep raising prices on us. They're already [using the cover of inflation and the pandemic](#) to raise prices and boost their bottom line, and pursue stock buybacks instead of lowering costs for American families. Now, they are trying to exploit this crisis to do the same yet again.

We strongly support your efforts to speed up the production of cheaper, clean energy alternatives, like wind and solar. Solar and wind are the cheapest energy sources available and they are getting cheaper every year. Accelerating the deployment of clean energy through clean energy tax credits will reduce energy bills for families saving the average household [\\$500 every year](#). Additionally, experts at Stanford [expect](#) household energy costs to decrease by 63% if the U.S. transitions to 100% renewable energy and result in 5 million new jobs.

To protect pocketbooks and the planet, we must break our dependence on volatile fossil fuels that are driving the climate crisis and speed up the production of cheaper, clean energy alternatives that can't be controlled by hostile foreign actors like Putin. We must reduce our dependence on oil and gas, and we urge you to continue to resist efforts by the oil lobby and its allies in Congress to needlessly lease more public lands for drilling. New leasing will ultimately further drive climate change, cost U.S. communities and taxpayers dearly, and will fail to impact energy prices.

Sincerely,

Colorado Fiscal Institute  
Conservation Lands Foundation  
Earthjustice  
Evergreen Action  
Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO)  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of Oil and Gas Impacted Coloradans (LOGIC)  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nevada Conservation league

Nevada Wildlife Federation  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation  
ProgressNow New Mexico  
Public Citizen  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
Sierra Club  
Western Colorado Alliance  
Wild Montana  
The Wilderness Society

CC: Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Charles Schumer, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate