

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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November 18, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

During the 117th Congress, the Committee on Oversight and Reform has held six hearings related to climate change and is planning a markup to consider legislation.¹ However, the Committee has yet to hear from any Biden Administration official responsible for setting climate change policy. This comes as no surprise since Democrats have not invited one Biden Administration Cabinet-level official the entire Congress. Instead of continuing to hold climate hearings attacking American industry or featuring witnesses speculating what the Biden Administration policies are, we respectfully request you convene a hearing with White House “Climate Czar” John Kerry who holds a Cabinet-level position.² Given recent U.S. emissions commitments to world leaders authorized and given by Mr. Kerry, this Committee must be afforded the opportunity to examine the intricacies of Mr. Kerry’s dealings and how the Administration’s climate policies are impacting the American economy, including skyrocketing gas prices and surging inflation.

In one of his first acts as President-elect, Joe Biden named John Kerry as “climate czar” for his Administration.³ This newly established position was created “to reflect the President-elect’s commitment to addressing climate change as an urgent national security issue.”⁴ News reports indicate Mr. Kerry’s role at the White House is “to look for avenues beyond Congress to advance climate priorities.”⁵ We encourage Committee Democrats to stop the streak of failed oversight hearings that have either attacked the American oil and gas industry or featured witnesses from outside the government. Instead, the Committee should hold a substantive hearing with a senior administration official to actually conduct real oversight over those with the ability to set policy.

¹ H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Past Hearings, *available at* <https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings>.

² Benjamin J. Hulac, *Biden picks Kerry for Cabinet-level climate role*, ROLL CALL, Nov. 23, 2020.

³ Rebecca Beitsch, *Biden names John Kerry as 'climate czar' in new administration*, THE HILL, Nov. 23, 2020.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

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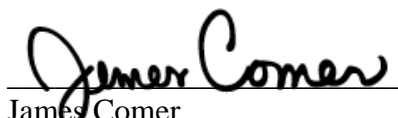
The United States is in an energy crisis, one that is directly related to the policies put forward by the Biden Administration. Gas prices are soaring and home heating costs this winter are expected to rise dramatically.⁶ Meanwhile, Committee Democrats are advocating for oil companies to reduce production.⁷ As the energy crises grows at home, “Climate Czar” John Kerry and the rest of the Administration jetted off to Scotland to attend the COP26 climate change conference.⁸ The officials attended this summit without a clear mandate from Congress but still made vague commitments without regard to transparency. All of this occurred while the Presidents of China and Russia, two of the world’s largest polluters, remained absent. In fact, Mr. Kerry himself suggested tactics such as “peer pressure,” “public scrutiny,” and “humiliation” would be necessary to enforce the agreements made on the world stage.⁹ Given the loose nature of these commitments and the strategy laid out by Mr. Kerry, it is critically important that Members of this Committee be given the opportunity to question him. It is particularly important since Mr. Kerry’s mandate from the President allows these decisions to be made without input from Congress.

Committee Republicans believe the Biden Administration should shift its focus to solving the energy crisis in the United States while bringing back good energy sector jobs before making agreements with foreign countries. There is no better time than now to hear directly from the officials, like Mr. Kerry, who are apparently responsible for setting policy. The Committee on Oversight and Reform exists to hold the executive branch accountable for its actions. As the main oversight body for the U.S. House of Representatives, we owe it to the American people to hear directly from senior Biden Administration officials and properly scrutinize policies related to climate change and their impacts on our economy. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment

⁶ Stan Choe, *Winter heating bills set to jump as inflation hits home*, ABC NEWS, Oct. 13, 2021.

⁷ See *Fueling the Climate Crisis: Exposing Big Oil’s Disinformation Campaign to Prevent Climate Action*, Hearing Before the H. Comm on Oversight & Reform, 117th Cong, Oct. 28, 2021.

⁸ John Kerry says Glasgow COP26 is the last best hope for the world, BBC NEWS, Oct. 19, 2021.

⁹ Ben German, “Peer pressure” and “humiliation” is key at COP26, AXIOS, Nov. 3, 2021.