

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 25, 2023

The Honorary Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

For almost two years, the Biden Administration has refused to respond to requests from the Committee on Oversight and Accountability regarding Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC) John Kerry's office. In the 117th Congress, we twice requested information from Envoy Kerry's office regarding his role as SPEC, a cabinet-level position that does not require Senate confirmation despite his apparent ability to bind the United States to international agreements.¹ We received no response. We wrote again to Envoy Kerry's office in the 118th Congress on February 2, 2023, requesting documents and information.² The White House referred our letter to the State Department. The State Department has not provided any documents or information. Further, the State Department has not provided any meaningful updates to Committee staff inquiries on the status of producing these documents.

As we previously wrote, Envoy Kerry is engaging in activities that skirt congressional authority, threaten foreign policy under the guise of climate advocacy, and could undermine our economic health. Yet, Envoy Kerry and his office are refusing to be transparent about their activities, spending, and staffing with the Committee—and the American people. We write a final time to request the Department to voluntarily produce the documents and information the Committee has requested. Please provide the following documents and information no later than May 9, 2023, covering the time period January 20, 2021, to the present:

1. All documents and communications regarding elements of the FY21, FY22, and FY23 budgets of the SPEC, including those discussed off the record;

¹ Letter from James Comer, et. al., Ranking Member, Comm. on Oversight and Reform to John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy (June 14, 2021), available at <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/RMC-JDJ-Letter-to-John-Kerry-Climate-Envoy.pdf>; Letter from James comer, et. al. Ranking Member, Comm. on Oversight and Reform to John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy (Oct. 4, 2022), available at <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Kerry-letter-10042022.pdf>.

² Letter from James Comer, et. al., Chairman, Comm. on Oversight and Accountability to John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy (February 2, 2023), available at <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Letter-to-Kerry-re-SPEC-118th-Congress.pdf>.

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2. A list of all individuals present at any discussions where elements of the FY21, FY22, and FY23 budgets of the SPEC were discussed, whether on or off the record;
3. A full list, including names, titles, and salaries of all individuals currently and previously employed by the office of the SPEC, as well as all ethics and financial disclosures of those individuals;
4. All documents and communications between any individual or individuals within the office of the SPEC and any third party, including but not limited to any environmental advocacy group or foreign government official; and
5. All documents and communications regarding domestic and international travel of the SPEC.

If the Department refuses to produce documents and information on this matter, the Committee will have to consider other means, including compulsory process.

To make arrangements to deliver documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074. Attached are instructions for producing the documents and information to the Committee.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Accountability

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability