

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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February 18, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

The Honorable Mark Christie
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

Dear Secretary Burgum, Secretary Wright, Administrator Zeldin, and Chairman Christie:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is investigating energy and environmental policies imposed by the Biden Administration that increased prices and limited choices for American consumers. The Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)—in addition to the newly established National Energy Council and Environmental Advisory Task Force—will serve crucial roles to rectify the damage done by the Biden Administration’s undermining of American energy’s affordability. As the principal investigative body of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee has a role in eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse which has contributed to less affordable commodities and less abundant energy resources in this country. Fulfilling this role in the 119th Congress will include examining the regulatory costs, bad policies, and veiled special interests that defined the Biden Administration. We therefore request a briefing with each of your respective agencies to inform our investigation and potential legislation to promote energy policies that put Americans first.

The Committee is encouraged by President Donald Trump’s executive orders to end the Biden Administration’s war on American energy.¹ In 2022, the national average gas price reached a historic high as it soared to more than \$5 per gallon.² In 2023, residential electricity prices surged by more than six percent, equaling “the highest growth registered since the beginning of the century.”³ Green New Deal policies wreaked havoc on Americans’ wallets,

¹ See Amelia Davidson, *Cheat sheet: Trump’s executive orders on energy and the environment, all in one place*, E&E NEWS (Jan. 23, 2025).

² *National Average Gas Prices*, AAA (last visited Jan. 29, 2025).

³ *Year-on-year growth in residential electricity prices in the United States from 2000 to 2023, with a forecast until 2025*, STATISTA (Oct. 15, 2024).

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accelerating the impact of rampant inflation and forcing families to forgo basic necessities in order to pay energy bills.⁴ Compounding the effect on consumers was the regulatory blitz purposely deployed by the Biden Administration to create more hurdles for American coal, oil, natural gas, and nuclear industries—which stood ready to help unleash American energy potential. In 2024 alone, federal agencies recorded \$1.4 trillion in net regulatory costs.⁵ EPA, by itself, recorded more than \$1 trillion in net regulatory costs, DOE recorded \$45.7 billion, and DOI recorded \$5.1 billion.⁶ These unacceptable costs will continue to be borne disproportionately by consumers until new, America First energy policies are fully implemented.

Accompanying sky-rocketing costs, the American people endured jarring energy policy decision changes designed to force Green New Deal behaviors and limit choices to the detriment of energy suppliers and their customers. At DOI, the Biden Administration released a five-year offshore leasing plan with the “lowest number of auctions in the history of the program.”⁷ Further, the Biden Administration closed 670 million acres of U.S. lands, waters, and ocean to oil and gas development.⁸ At DOE, the Biden Administration depleted our emergency oil reserves to historic lows,⁹ banned new liquified natural gas (LNG) export permitting,¹⁰ and funneled billions to not-yet-ready green technologies.¹¹ At EPA, environmental regulators were transformed into energy and land management policymakers¹²—all while earmarking billions of dollars of so-called environmental justice grants to leftist environmental groups.¹³ The agency issued the Clean Power Plan 2.0,¹⁴ electric-vehicle mandates,¹⁵ and an invasive methane policy coercing Americans to adopt expensive energy derived from supposedly green sources and drive substantial changes to the electric grid while punishing traditional energy industries.¹⁶ FERC, responsible for regulating interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil, undertook dramatic rulemaking that only exacerbated problems created by government mandates and

⁴ See Anne Marie Lee, *Many Americans struggle to keep the lights turned on as energy costs and usage rise*, CBS NEWS (Dec. 12, 2024).

⁵ Dan Goldbeck, *2024: The Year in Regulation*, AMERICAN ACTION FORUM (Jan. 6, 2025).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Jarrett Renshaw and Nichola Groom, *Biden's 5-year offshore oil plan to have historically few lease sales, none in 2024, sources say*, REUTERS (Sept. 28, 2023).

⁸ See Letter from James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform, to Deb Haaland, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of the Interior (Jan. 10, 2025).

⁹ Arathy Somasekhar, *Crude in U.S. emergency reserve falls to lowest since Nov. 1984*, REUTERS (Sept. 6, 2022).

¹⁰ Benoît Morenne, *Biden Pauses Approvals for LNG Exports*, WALL ST. J. (Jan. 26, 2024).

¹¹ See e.g., *Biden and Harris are Wasting Your Money Again on Green Energy Projects*, INST. FOR ENERGY RESEARCH (Dec. 3, 2024).

¹² See Molly Christian, *'Unlawful, Unrealistic, Unachievable': EPA Releases 'Barrage' of Power Plant Rules*, NRECA (Apr. 26, 2024).

¹³ See Kevin Bogardus, *EPA awards \$1.6 billion in environmental justice grants*, E&E NEWS (Dec. 12, 2024).

¹⁴ EPA, Press Release, *Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Suite of Standards to Reduce Pollution from Fossil Fuel-Fired Power Plants* (Apr. 25, 2024).

¹⁵ Douglas Holtz-Eakin, *EPA's Kick in the Tailpipe*, AMERICAN ACTION FORUM, (Mar. 21, 2024).

¹⁶ EPA, Press Release, *Biden-Harris Administration Announces Final Rule to Cut Methane Emissions, Strengthen and Update Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting for the Oil and Gas Sector* (May 6, 2024).

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subsidies supporting unreliable renewable energy sources distributed on the grid.¹⁷ The status quo favoring expensive alternative energy developers and their investors needs to be reworked to guarantee an all-of-the-above energy market that serves Americans.

Collectively, the ideologically motivated policy decisions at DOI, DOE, EPA, and FERC under the Biden Administration catered to special interests and foreign adversaries. Special interest groups descended upon the Biden Administration to advance the Green New Deal.¹⁸ The revolving door between the Biden Administration and anti-fossil fuel industry has continued to make its final rotation, with reports of a DOI official exiting to join an organization advocating for the ban of “all oil, gas, and coal development on public lands...”¹⁹ Former DOE Secretary Jennifer Granholm, in her final days in office, approved billion-dollar “green” energy loans to utility companies in her home state of Michigan that previously donated to her 2006 gubernatorial campaign.²⁰ And leftist environmental groups are now lining up to sue the Trump Administration on policies meant to help the American people, even when policies are not even directly tied to the environment.²¹

As the Trump Administration returns American energy policies to common sense principles furthering production dominance and affordability for consumers, the Committee seeks your assistance in an examination of the flawed energy legacies of the Biden Administration. To this end, please make arrangements to schedule a briefing with Committee staff on this matter as soon as possible.

To schedule the briefing or to ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority Staff at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform 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. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

¹⁷ Matthew Daly, *US Energy Panel Approves Rule to Expand Transmission of Renewable Power*, AP NEWS (May 13, 2024).

¹⁸ See *Oversight of the Biden Administration's Pause on Liquefied Natural Gas Exports: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Econ. Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs*, 118th Cong. (Apr. 18, 2024); *Exposing the Truth on LNG: How the Administration Played Politics with America's Energy Future: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Econ. Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs*, 118th Cong. (Dec. 4, 2024).

¹⁹ Thomas Catenacci, *Biden Admin's Revolving Door With Left-Wing Green Groups Continues as Environmental Official Lands Cushy Gig With Anti-Fossil Fuel Radicals*, WASH. FREE BEACON (Dec. 4, 2024).

²⁰ Mike Brennan, *Energy Secretary Granholm Sends Billions Of Dollars In Energy Loans To Michigan*, MITECHNEWS.COM (Jan. 20, 2025).

²¹ Robin Bravender, *Green group vows to sue if DOGE records aren't released*, E&E NEWS (Jan. 28, 2025).

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Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Eric Burlison
Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,
Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs

cc: The Honorable Gerald Connolly, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Maxwell Frost, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs