

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

On June 15, 2021, the United States District Court Western District of Louisiana, Lake Charles Division, issued a nationwide preliminary injunction<sup>1</sup> against President Biden's Executive Order 14008, Section 208 (EO), that mandated a "pause" on new oil and gas leasing on both federal offshore and onshore lands. Through the preliminary injunction, the Court acknowledged the injury caused by the "pause," noting millions of dollars at stake.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the Court's decision indicates the strong likelihood the states will succeed in their challenge against the Biden Administration.<sup>3</sup> We look forward to the Department of the Interior's (the Department) resumption of lease sales, in compliance with the Court's order.

We remain concerned, however, about the harms already caused by the mandated "pause." For example, immediate impacts of the EO's "pause" included cancellation of Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale 257, Planned Lease Sales 259 and 261<sup>4</sup> and BLM lease sales scheduled for March 9, 2021<sup>5</sup> in Nevada and March 23, 2021 in Montana.<sup>6</sup> In addition to resuming lease sales, the Department should provide remedies for the cancellation of leases that occurred this year.

Additionally, the Department is expected to release its review of the onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs in the coming weeks. Despite requesting additional information from the public related to the March 25, 2021 forum on the review of the leasing programs,<sup>7</sup> it is unclear what information was received and how it was incorporated in the Department's interim

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/LouisianaetalvBidenetalDocketNo221cv00778WDLaMar242021CourtDocket/6?1623794815>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/us-judge-blocks-biden-pausing-oil-gas-lease-auctions-2021-06-15/>

<sup>4</sup> 2017-2022 Lease Sale Schedule. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. <https://www.boem.gov/2017-2022-lease-sale-schedule>

<sup>5</sup> Nevada Oil and Gas Lease Sales. Oil and Gas. Bureau of Land Management.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales/nevada>

<sup>6</sup> Montana\_Dakotas Oil and Gas Lease Sales. Oil and Gas. Bureau of Land Management.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales/montana-dakotas>

<sup>7</sup> Interior Department Announces Details for the Public Forum on Federal Oil and gas Program. Department of the Interior. March 18, 2021. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-details-public-forum-federal-oil-and-gas-program>

report.<sup>8</sup> Without access to this information, Congress and the public cannot fully evaluate whether the Department thoughtfully considered the input of interested stakeholders in reviewing the programs. The Department's lack of transparency increases our concerns surrounding how the review was conducted.

Congress made the requirement of regular lease sales clear through statutes, including the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the Mineral Leasing Act. To understand the Department's plans to comply with the Court's order and its statutory obligations, we request you provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 1, 2021:

1. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to resume regular lease sales.
2. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to hold additional lease sales to remedy the cancellation of sales between January 27, 2021 and June 15, 2021.
3. A document sufficient to describe the Department's legal analysis to support its decision to pause oil and gas leasing.
4. A document sufficient to show the impact of lease cancellations on Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act funding resulting from lost bonus bids, royalties and rents and the Department's proposed remedy for the related revenue loss.
5. A document sufficient to show the impact of lease cancellations on federal energy revenues made available to states under the Mineral Leasing Act resulting from lost bonus bids, royalties and rent, and the Department's proposed remedy for the related revenue loss.
6. A document sufficient to describe the Department's plans to make the comments and additional information submitted for the March 25, 2021 forum available to the public.
7. A document listing all members of the Paris Climate Agreement that have banned oil and gas development.
8. A document sufficient to describe the Department's analysis on how U.S. energy independence would be impacted prior to executing the decision to pause new oil and gas leasing on both federal offshore and onshore lands.

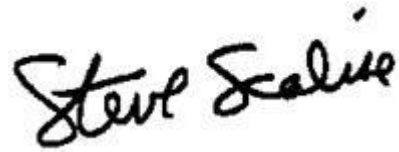
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<sup>8</sup> Interior Department Announces Details for the Public Forum on Federal Oil and gas Program. Department of the Interior. March 18, 2021. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-details-public-forum-federal-oil-and-gas-program>

Sincerely,



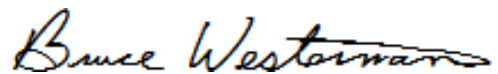
Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader



Steve Scalise  
Republican Whip



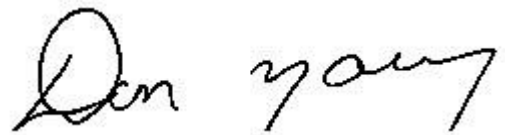
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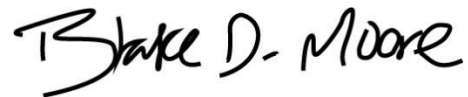
Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



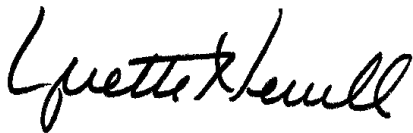
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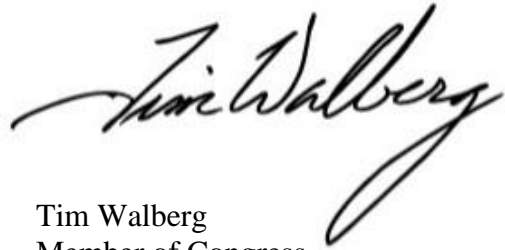
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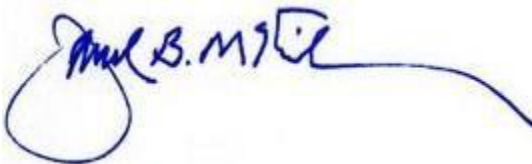
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Enclosure