

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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October 13, 2021

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

Dear Chairwoman Maloney,

In our letter dated August 18, 2021, we raised concerns regarding the “motivation and legitimacy of your inquiries” into the oil and gas industry.<sup>1</sup> In light of new information about your investigation, our concerns have only heightened. We understand that Democrats have informed invited witnesses that they must appear in-person for the tentatively scheduled October 28, 2021, hearing. This demand not only contradicts the precedent of the Committee during the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress but raises further questions about the authenticity of your investigation. We respectfully request that all witnesses invited to appear before this Committee be treated equally, which means having the opportunity to appear remotely in accordance with House rules.

In May 2020, for the first time in the U.S. House of Representatives 230-year history, Democrats changed the House rules to allow proxy voting and remote committee hearings.<sup>2</sup> While Republicans opposed this change, Democrats have continued to extend the rule.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, on September 30, 2021, Speaker Pelosi extended the ability to conduct Committee business remotely until November 15, 2021.<sup>4</sup> The decision was made after confirmation from the House Sergeant-At-Arms and Capitol physician that ““a public health emergency is in effect due to a novel coronavirus.””<sup>5</sup> Since this rule was first adopted in 2020, the Committee has not held a hearing without a virtual option. Why are you now demanding that oil and gas CEOs appear in person?

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hon. James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, & Hon. Ralph Norman, Ranking Member, H. Subcomm. on Env’t, to Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, & Hon. Ro Khanna, Chairman, H. Subcomm. on Env’t (Aug. 18, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> See John Bresnahan, POLITICO, *Pelosi Announcement Allows Proxy Voting on House Floor Next week*, (May 20, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Caroline Vakil, THE HILL, *House Proxy Voting Extended Into Mid-November*, (Sept. 30, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*


<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

During the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, over 100 witnesses have participated in hearings virtually before the Committee.<sup>6</sup> This includes a Senate confirmed head of an agency, chief executive officers of publicly traded corporations, and a commanding general in the U.S. Army.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Democrats have allowed many high-profile witnesses to appear remotely, including feminist activist Gloria Steinem, climate activist Greta Thunberg, and soccer star Megan Rapinoe. Just last week, on October 5, 2021, the Committee held a hearing on the federal response to Hurricane Ida that was entirely virtual.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, the witnesses invited to appear on October 28, 2021—about two weeks after another completely virtual Committee hearing—are expected to be in-person. These witnesses, however, should not be treated differently simply because Democrats do not like them or want a photo opportunity.

If the purpose of inviting witnesses from the oil and gas industry is to obtain testimony, they should have the option to appear remotely like other witnesses this Congress. However, it appears that Democrats are more interested in grandstanding than obtaining testimony. In a media report dated May 19, 2021, Environment Subcommittee Chairman Ro Khanna threatened the same oil and gas executives with subpoenas over four months before they were ever invited to testify at a hearing.<sup>9</sup> The demand for these witnesses to appear in-person reveals the real motivations of this investigation: to turn it into a spectacle.

We urge Committee Democrats to apply the same rules for hearings to all witnesses and not hold any group of individuals to a different standard simply to deliver partisan theatre for primetime news.

Sincerely,



James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Jody Hice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government  
Operations

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<sup>6</sup> H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, *Hearings*, available at <https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings> (last visited Oct. 13, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> See *Hurricane Ida & Beyond: Readiness, Recovery, and Resilience*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, 117th Cong., (Oct. 5, 2021) (Remote appearance by the Hon. Deanne Criswell, Administrator, FEMA); *Sleeping Danger: The Rock 'n Play and Failures in Infant Product Safety*, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, 117th Cong., (Jun. 7, 2021) (Remote appearance by Ynon Kreiz, CEO, Mattel, Inc.); *The Capitol Insurrection: Unexplained Delays and Unanswered Questions* (Part II), Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, 117th Cong., (Jun. 15, 2021) (Remote appearance by Gen. Charles E. Flynn, Commanding General, U.S. Army Pacific).

<sup>8</sup> FEMA hearing, *supra* note 7.

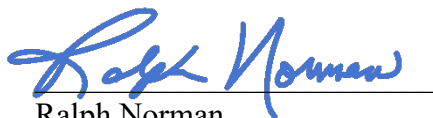
<sup>9</sup> Nick Sobczyk, E&E NEWS, *Ro Khanna Mulls Subpoena of Fossil Fuel Executives*, (May 19, 2021).



Glenn S. Grothman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security



Michael Cloud  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic and  
Consumer Policy



Ralph Norman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment



Nancy Mace  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and  
Civil Liberties

Cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman  
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