

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2022

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

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

We write to request that you hold a hearing to examine the coordinated effort by Russian entities to finance domestic environmental non-governmental organizations (NGO) to reduce the energy security of the United States. Specifically, the Committee should demand answers from these organizations regarding their potential financial connections to Russia and probe their promotion of anti-energy policies that ultimately benefit Russia's geopolitical interests to the detriment of the United States. Given the current global conflict, it is crucial that the Committee exercise its investigative powers to shine a spotlight on alarming reports of Russia's attempt to buy influence in U.S. politics through domestic environmental groups.

Russia's energy sector plays an important role in facilitating its militaristic ambitions. Russia's energy sales substantially support the current attack on Ukraine. According to the BBC, 39 percent of Russia's federal budget coming from its energy industry.¹ Russian energy also plays a role in deterring the international community from opposing Russian aggression. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Russia is currently one of the world's largest combined exporters of oil, gas, and coal.² More than 30 countries rely on Russia to power their economies and heat their homes.³ President Putin knows that its energy sector creates internal political tension in countries that want to oppose Russia's Ukraine invasion, but these countries also fear higher energy prices.

President Putin has made it clear that U.S. energy production weakens Russia's global influence. Multiple officials warned the U.S. and its allies of President Putin's intentions to manipulate the global energy market. In November 2011, Fiona Hill, former U.S. National Security Council Senior Director for Europe and Russia, testified that Putin described "American fracking as a great threat to Russian interests" and was "struck by how much he stressed this issue" during a discussion forum she attended in Moscow.⁴ Just three years later, Anders Rasmussen, former Secretary-General of NATO, supported Hill's testimony. Specifically, he relayed he had met with allies who reported that Russia was "engaged actively" with non-governmental organizations (NGO) to discredit fracking using "their sophisticated information

¹ Angelina Davydova, *Will Russia ever Leave Fossil Fuels Behind*, BBC, Nov. 23, 2021.

² EIA, *Europe is a key destination for Russia's energy exports*, Mar. 14, 2022.

³ Al Jazeera, *Infographic: How much of your country's gas comes from Russia?*, Mar. 17, 2022.

⁴ Philip Klein, *Fiona Hill Says That She Heard Putin Describe American Fracking as A 'Great Threat' to Russia*, Washington Examiner, Nov. 21, 2019.

and disinformation operations.”⁵ The goal of this campaign was to generate and maintain as much European and American dependence on Russian energy.⁶

In the 115th Congress, Representatives Lamar Smith and Randy Weber detailed a concerning example of this in a letter to former Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin.⁷ The letter described how a Bermudan shell corporation known as Klein Ltd. was used to siphon millions of dollars to an environmental NGO called the Sea Change Foundation.⁸ This shell company was specifically tied to the Russian government through one of its directors, Nicholas Hoskins.⁹ Prior to his role with Klein Ltd., Hoskins was a director at a hedge fund management firm that “invested heavily in Russian oil and gas” and vice president at a law firm with a direct connection to the state-owned Russian oil company Rosneft.¹⁰

According to IRS tax filings from 2010 and 2011, Klein Ltd. donated \$23 million to the Sea Change Foundation and was responsible for almost 50 percent of contributions made to the organization during those years.¹¹ This organization gave \$100 million in grant money to environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club, the Center for American Progress, the US Climate Action Network, and the Natural Resource Defense Council, with the purpose of reducing “reliance on high carbon energy.”¹² Given the impact that Russia’s control of the European energy market has had in the lead up and prosecution of the war in Ukraine, it is critical that Congress gains a better understanding of the role that Russian financing has had in shaping American environmental policy and sentiment.

We respectfully request you use the authority of this Committee to immediately convene a hearing to obtain answers from NGOs on their financial ties to Russia and their willingness to push foreign propaganda that interferes with U.S. energy policies and interests. Please inform us of the date you intend to hold this important hearing.

Thank you for your attention to this important request. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact the Republican staff at (202)-225-5074.

⁵ Fiona Harvey, *Russia 'Secretly Working with Environmentalists to Oppose Fracking'*, The Guardian, Jun. 19, 2014.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Representatives Lamar Smith and Randy Weber, Letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Jun. 29, 2017.

⁸ *Id.*

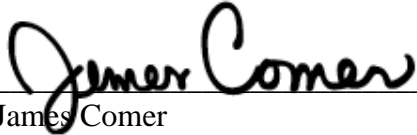
⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Lachlan Markay, *Foreign Firm Funding U.S. Green Groups Tied to State-Owned Russian Oil Company*, Washington Free Beacon, Jan. 27, 2015.

¹¹ *Id.* 9; Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works, *Staff Report: The Chain of Environmental Command: How a Club of Billionaires and Their Foundation Control the Environmental Movement and Obama’s EPA*, 113th Congress (Print Jul. 30, 2014).

¹² *Id.*

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Reform



Warren Davidson
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment



Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



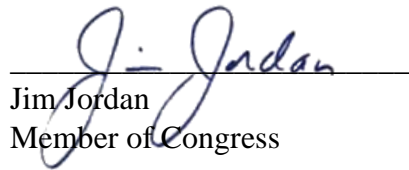
Glenn S. Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security



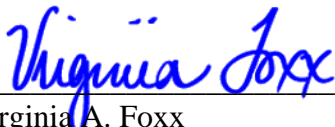
Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy



Nancy Mace
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties



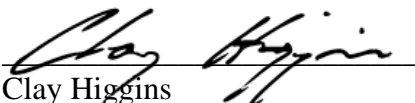
Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Virginia A. Foxx
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



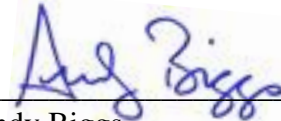
Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



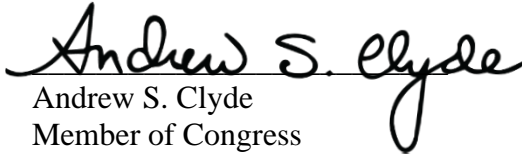
Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



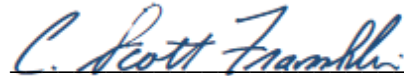
Fred Keller
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



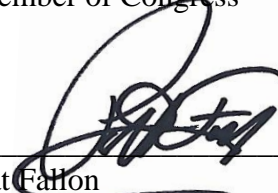
Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Jake LaTurner
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress

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
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties