

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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March 4, 2022

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

We have questioned the “motivation and legitimacy of your inquiries” into the oil and gas industry since the investigation began in August 2021.<sup>1</sup> The tactics used by Committee Democrats validate our concerns, including issuing unnecessary subpoenas to entities fully cooperating with your investigation, requesting that board members’ spouses phone numbers and names be unredacted in document productions, and continuing to claim companies are not cooperating despite providing over 400,000 pages of documents. Now that world events have shown the importance of domestic oil and gas production, you are canceling the March 8, 2022 hearing with oil company board members even after you sent letters “demanding their testimony” on that date.<sup>2</sup> Since there is no longer a pressing need to hear from board members, we call on you to stop your baseless investigation and instead require the Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary testify before the House Oversight and Reform Committee. Her testimony is critical to understand what, if anything, the Administration is doing to lower energy prices for Americans and ceasing reliance on Russian oil and gas.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has made it clear to the entire world the necessity for the United States to maintain a strong position in our domestic production of oil and gas. It is now more critical than ever for the United States to expand production capacity of our natural resources to protect our interests and not be beholden to countries like Russia the way Europe is after prematurely moving away from fossil fuels.<sup>3</sup> Under President Biden, U.S. imports of Russian oil and gas products have increased to an all time high of 245 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum—each barrel costing more than \$100. This is a 24 percent increase from 2020 levels.<sup>4</sup> Essentially, President Biden has allowed the U.S. to fund Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. The fact that our intelligence community warned of an invasion and President Biden continued buying Russian oil is unconscionable.

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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> Press Release, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform, Chairs Maloney, Khanna Demand Big Oil Board Members Testify at March Hearing (Feb. 3, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> The Editorial Board, *Energy, Russia, and American Power*, WSJ (Feb. 27, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> David McHugh, *Nations agree to release 60M barrels of oil amid Russian war*, ABC News (Mar. 1, 2022).

When the geopolitical reality finally became apparent to Committee Democrats—after months of attacking the industry and encouraging them to decrease production—you abruptly canceled the March 8 hearing because it is no longer politically expedient to vilify companies that have always been crucial to maintaining our national security.<sup>5</sup> During the Committee’s October 2021 hearing one Democrat member asked Chevron’s CEO, “are you embarrassed as an American company that your production is going up?”<sup>6</sup> Thankfully, the companies did not take Democrats’ advice or the United States would be even more reliant on Russia for energy.<sup>7</sup>

For months, you have pressured board members to appear at the hearing you canceled earlier this week. On February 8, 2022, during the Committee’s hearing, *Fueling the Climate Crisis: Examining Big Oil’s Climate Pledges*, you stated: “when the Committee invited board members of these companies to come in today and explain their pledges, they declined to appear on the date we requested. None of them showed up today. Not a single one.”<sup>8</sup> Yet when they all agreed to appear at a hearing, you no longer wanted to hear from them. To make matters worse, when you invited them to the March 8 hearing you stated: “[t]his will be your last opportunity to appear voluntarily before the Committee.”<sup>9</sup> What changed about the urgency to hold this hearing other than Russia’s invasion of Ukraine showing the importance of domestic oil and gas production?

Threatening witnesses with compulsory testimony, one of the most powerful tools bestowed upon the Committee, is an action that should not be taken lightly. Then canceling the hearing after all the witnesses were voluntarily appearing to simply avoid embarrassment only demonstrates that your pursuits are not motivated by a search for truth but rather an exercise in partisan political theater. It is shameful that the power of the Oversight and Reform Committee is being used for such obvious political purposes.

Now that the true motivations of your investigation have been exposed, we urge you to hold hearings that focus on the needs of the American people. It is time to take action: gas is almost a dollar more than a year ago; natural gas, which is used to heat nearly half of all U.S. homes, is 32 percent more expensive than it was a year ago; and many Americans will pay up to \$1,700 more for heat this winter. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is likely to cause energy costs to increase. Pleas from Committee Democrats for oil and gas companies to reduce production are unrealistic given the global situation and the fact that green energy sources simply cannot meet the world’s energy needs.

We request that the Committee cease its baseless inquires and immediately convene a hearing with Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm to learn what plans the Administration has to work with industry to lower energy costs for the American people and protect our national security interests. This Committee must return to conducting legitimate oversight instead of playing political games at a time when the stakes are so high. Please notify Committee Republicans by March 11, 2022, whether you intend to invite Secretary Granholm as a witness.

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<sup>5</sup> H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov’t Reform, *Fueling the Climate Crisis: Exposing Big Oil’s Disinformation Campaign to Prevent Climate Action*, 117th Cong. (Oct. 28, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Collin Eaton, *Why Does the U.S. Buy Russian Oil?*, WSJ, (Mar. 2, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Opening Statement of Carolyn B. Maloney, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, *Hearing on “Fueling the Climate Crisis: Examining Big Oil’s Climate Pledges,”* 117th Cong. (Feb. 8, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

Sincerely,



James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Ralph Norman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment



Jody Hice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations



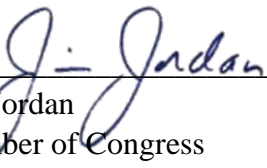
Glenn Grothman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security



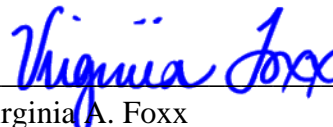
Michael Cloud  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic and  
Consumer Policy



Nancy Mace  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and  
Civil Liberties



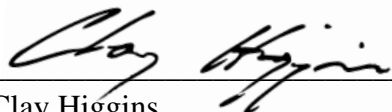
Jim Jordan  
Member of Congress



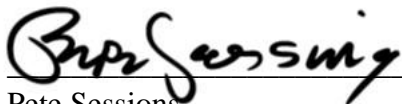
Virginia A. Foxx  
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



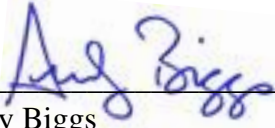
Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



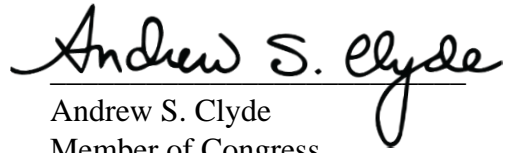
Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress



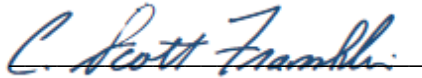
Fred Keller  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Andrew S. Clyde  
Member of Congress



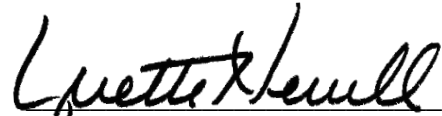
Scott Franklin  
Member of Congress



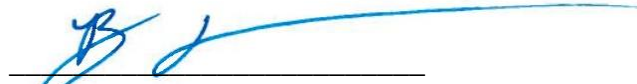
Jake LaTurner  
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment

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 Jamie Raskin, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties