

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 4, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As American families and businesses approach the 2021-2022 winter season, rising energy prices and potential energy shortages are a universal concern, regardless of political party.

Even before colder temperatures set in, natural gas inventories around the nation are 5.5% below the five-year average,¹ and demand has ramped up as the economy continues to recover.² Due to lower supply and higher demand, natural gas prices are more than 250% higher than they were this time last year³ and the Energy Information Agency (EIA) expects natural gas prices to climb even higher this winter⁴ based on supply projections.

These increased prices are projected to raise the heating bills of the 47 percent of American homes that rely on natural gas for heating and the 40 percent of American homes heated with electricity,⁵ the price of which is increasingly reflective of natural gas prices. Similarly, the average price of heating oil and propane is already double what it was one year ago,⁶ with prices expected to continue to rise this winter.⁷

Rather than looking to foreign countries like Russia, Venezuela, and Iran to outsource a solution or pleading with a cartel like the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase production, American energy producers can solve this shortage to benefit all Americans.

After numerous conversations over the last year with domestic energy producers, the number one reason they cite for these higher and increasing prices is depressed investment in our production due to regulatory uncertainty.

Business leaders are reluctant to make complex, long-term investments in expensive new wells, pipelines, and other infrastructure critical to increasing production and keeping American energy prices low if these projects will be delayed or overly burdened by new, expansive regulations or taxes. No doubt your Administration heard this concern directly from America's energy

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=49956>

² <https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/n9140us2m.htm>

³ <https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/rngwhhdm.htm>

⁴ <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/>

⁵ https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/special/winter/2021_Winter_Fuels.pdf

⁶ <https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/heatingoilpropane/>

⁷ <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/>

producers when White House staff requested assistance from domestic oil and gas producers to help lower American energy prices.⁸ While consulting with energy producers is a step in the right direction, there are several immediate and reasonable actions your Administration can take to increase natural gas supplies and ease prices – without sacrificing safety or environmental stewardship.

1. Lift the ban on oil and gas lease sales on Federal lands and waters.

While your Administration has set a goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions, certain actions of your Administration have run counter to your stated objective. Since 2005, U.S. energy production has greatly increased while at the same time the nation’s total energy-related carbon dioxide emissions have fallen 16 percent.⁹ This reduction is largely due to the use of clean, abundant natural gas,¹⁰ in part from Federal lands and waters, which would otherwise be substituted by higher emissions-intensive energy sources imported from overseas.¹¹

On January 27, 2021, you signed Executive Order 14008: “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad” by which your Administration halted all oil and gas leasing on public lands and waters. With this action, your Administration has limited access to the very sources of energy that allowed our nation to reduce emissions. The Department of the Interior should immediately restart leasing on public lands and waters and also guarantee future lease sales will continue in order to send a strong signal to energy producers that supply will be made available to meet present and future energy demands.

2. Accelerate FERC, U.S. Army Corps permitting and interagency coordination to approve pipeline projects that debottleneck constrained energy.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was created in 1977 in response to the national energy crisis and has the mission to assist consumers in obtaining economically efficient, safe, reliable, and secure energy services at a reasonable cost. Unfortunately, in recent years FERC permitting and coordination with other Federal agencies has slowed natural gas transmission projects leading to supply bottlenecks around the country.

FERC, along with Federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), should emphasize that any interstate natural gas transmission meeting environmental and safety regulations is in the national interest – because without reliable, affordable natural gas, home heating will be extremely costly, if not outright impossible, for many families this winter.

3. End the regulatory uncertainty that is stifling investments in energy.

Finally, to ease natural gas price increases, your Administration should end the regulatory uncertainty that is plaguing our economy by publicly announcing it will not support any future

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/white-house-asks-us-oil-and-gas-companies-help-lower-fuel-costs-sources-2021-10-13>

⁹ <https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/carbon>

¹⁰ https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/special/supplements/2021/2021_sp_02.pdf

¹¹ https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/oil-and-gas-energy-program/Leasing/Five-Year-Program/2012-2017/BOEMOceanInfo/fpeis_volume1.pdf

regulations that inhibit or tax existing or near-term natural gas production levels. For example, you should **not support**:


- Restrictive changes to the EPA’s methane regulations on existing oil and natural gas infrastructure or operations;
- Prohibitive revisions to the Council on Environmental Quality’s National Environmental Policy Act rules;
- Unnecessary changes to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ nationwide permits (particularly, NWP 12 for linear infrastructure including pipelines);
- Inhibitory modifications to the Clean Water Act Section 401 certification process;
- Expansion of the definition of “Waters of the United States”; and
- Any proposal to ban natural gas imports or exports.

In summary, as President of the United States, you have the authority to unleash our nation’s clean, abundant, and affordable natural gas resources for the benefit of all Americans and the world. This is particularly critical for the millions of Americans heading into winter who are worried about how they will keep warm. We are committed to assisting your Administration if you wish to work together in a bipartisan fashion to chart a new course that establishes the kind of regulatory framework and legislative priorities that will increase domestic energy production.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



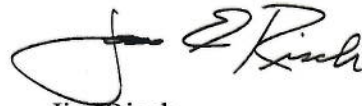
Josh Hawley
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Jim Risch
United States Senator



Roger Marshall
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator



John Hoeven
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Roger Wicker
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator