# Industry Lobbying AMID COVID-19

According to POLITICO, “Lobbyists for industries left reeling by the pandemic were hustling just as hard” as Senate Republicans to shape the trillion-dollar stimulus package. POLITICO reported that “Lobbyists for drone makers and hog farmers — not to mention the oil and gas industry, among others — are looking to hitch a ride on the federal government’s coronavirus response.” Energy executive and major Republican donor Dan Eberhart said, “The oil and gas industry is pushing the administration for [Strategic Petroleum Reserves] purchases, faster drilling permits on federal lands, royalty relief and increased deductions for drilling expenses”.

Key findings:

**Industry Found Trump Administration’s Oil and Gas Relief Response “Baffling” and “Mystifying.”** In response to the Trump Administration’s reported plan to allow states to take the lead on potential oil and gas relief, some industry representatives continued to register surprise over the perceived lack of urgency. One oilman suggested the lack of action was “absolutely baffling,” another industry source suggested the President’s legacy would be “[sitting] idly by while the independent oil and gas industry was irrevocably destroyed,” while a third found it “mystifying” and suggested he was “glad the President has such a good relationship with the Saudis because in a few years he is going to be buying a lot of oil from Saudi Arabia.”

* **U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) On Royalty Relief: [To Be Determined] In The Sense That [Interior Secretary] Bernhardt Tells Me He's Doing Everything He Can.”** Regarding potential royalty relief from the Interior Department and Secretary David Bernhardt, U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) stated that it was “[to be determined] in the sense that Bernhardt tells me he's doing everything he can.” Cassidy further stated that industry believed the agency wasn’t moving fast enough, but Secretary Bernhardt had told him no one had filed any royalty relief applications yet so “let's have the conversation again in four weeks.”
* **Canary LLC CEO Dan Eberhart: “What Congress Needs To Do Is Set Aside Its Biases And Help All Of America's Energy Companies, Whether They Produce Oil And Gas Or Electricity From Solar And Wind. These Are All American Jobs That Are On The Cutting Block.”** “‘Helping the oil industry preserve jobs has become a hyperpartisan issue,’ said Dan Eberhart, CEO of Colorado-based Canary LLC, one of the largest private oil field service companies in the nation and a Republican donor who has urged Trump to aid the industry by lifting tariffs on steel and other manufactured products that the industry uses. ‘What Congress needs to do is set aside its biases and help all of America's energy companies, whether they produce oil and gas or electricity from solar and wind. These are all American jobs that are on the cutting block.’”

**Oil and Gas Industry Uncertain When Federal Lending Program Would Begin Helping Small and Mid-Size Companies.** In early May 2020, the Federal Reserve expanded criteria for the Main Street Lending Program that gave greater access to financing for small and mid-sized oil and gas companies. According to Independent Petroleum Association of American Vice President Lee Fuller, “I don’t know if they haven’t gotten anywhere or if they just haven't gotten far enough…They're working on it. I don't know what the barriers are.”

**Dueling Legislation Introduced Related to Oil and Gas Industry During Covid.** In early May 2020, legislation was introduced by Senate industry allies that would appropriate $3 billion to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Dueling legislation introduced by House and Senate Democrats would prevent the White House from providing aid to fossil fuel companies.

**Trump Believed Oil “Demand [Was] Coming Back.”** “President Trump said Friday that oil ‘demand is coming back’ even as industry analysts predicted that global oil production could collapse by the largest amount in history in the next three months. Meeting with House Republicans on Friday, Trump seemed inclined to let markets spark a recovery as parts of the country reopen and demand for crude inches up despite the ongoing pandemic. ‘You're up to $25, $26 a barrel. And a little bit more, and you're going to save your energy industry, really, because we're No. 1,’ Trump told the group at a televised White House meeting, as he took praise for his role in a global agreement last month to cut oil production. ‘And Russia and Saudi Arabia, I got them together, and they came to a good conclusion for us and for them and for everybody. And once that demand goes up, it's going to be great for the energy industry.’”

## Background

**POLITICO: Oil and Gas Industry, Among Others “Looking to Hitch a Ride on the Federal Government’s Coronavirus Response.”** “Lobbyists for drone makers and hog farmers — not to mention the oil and gas industry, among others — are looking to hitch a ride on the federal government’s coronavirus response. The deluge of ‘asks,’ as K Street refers to such pleas, include policies that might help address the crisis and revive the economy. But other proposals are similar to ones the same industries have pushed for years and have only a tenuous connection to the pandemic. Even some in the influence industry are calling foul. ‘Some of the requests for aid appear opportunistic on their face while others seem truly desperate,’ the lobbyist Dave Oxner wrote in a recent note to clients.” [POLITICO, [3/16/20](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/16/lobbyists-coronavirus-relief-efforts-131541)]

**Energy Executive Dan Eberhart: Oil and Gas Industry Pushed the Administration for Strategic Petroleum Purchases, Faster Drilling Permits on Federal Lands, Royalty Relief and Increased Deductions for Drilling Expenses.** “Other examples abound. ‘The oil and gas industry is pushing the administration for [Strategic Petroleum Reserves] purchases, faster drilling permits on federal lands, royalty relief and increased deductions for drilling expenses,’ said Dan Eberhart, an energy executive and major Republican donor. Aside from the suggestion that the administration buy oil for the petroleum reserve as a way to help oil producers — which Trump announced he would do on Friday — the other measures have been part of the industry’s wish list for years.” [POLITICO, [3/16/20](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/16/lobbyists-coronavirus-relief-efforts-131541)]

* **Eberhart: “Typically, Cheaper Gasoline Prices At The Pump Is Better For Consumers, The Oil Industry Can Take A Back Seat. But Trump Now Believes That This Is Going To Cause Economic Disruption In The Red States And The Middle Of The Country, And This Is A Huge Problem.”** “Dan Eberhart, a GOP donor and CEO of Colorado-based Canary LLC, one of the largest private oil field service companies in the nation, said there has been a ‘frenzy’ of calls between industry leaders, congressional lawmakers and White House officials with the industry facing an unprecedented situation. ‘The White House very much gets it,’ said Eberhart. ‘Typically, cheaper gasoline prices at the pump is better for consumers, the oil industry can take a back seat. But Trump now believes that this is going to cause economic disruption in the red states and the middle of the country, and this is a huge problem.’” [E&E News, [4/2/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/02/stories/1062763805)]

**Former ConocoPhillips Lobbyist Don Duncan: “This Kind Of Economic Package Is Going To Create A Lot Of Mischief.”** “Some lobbyists warn of a public backlash if the stimulus package turns into a big honeypot where money is disbursed to big business with too few controls. ‘I think the public is going to look very skeptically at special industry bailouts that don’t address critical needs in the midst of the crisis,’ said John Jonas, a veteran healthcare lobbyist with Akin Gump, a giant law and lobbying firm. ‘This kind of economic package is going to create a lot of mischief,’ said Don Duncan, who used to run the DC office of oil giant ConocoPhillips. ‘Congress and the administration need to clearly define where such economic help is justified and needed most to avoid misuse of tax dollars.’” [The Guardian, [3/20/20](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/20/coronavirus-washington-lobbyists-bailout)]

**CNBC: Reports Indicated President Trump Was Considering a Federal Aid Package for the Shale Industry, Potentially in the Form of Low-Interest Loans.** “Still, the American Petroleum Institute, which represents companies including Halliburton, Hess and Occidental Petroleum, is not seeking federal aid, said the the spokeswoman, Bethany Aronhalt. That statement comes despite reports Tuesday indicating President Donald Trump was considering a federal aid package for the shale industry, potentially in the form of low-interest loans. An official told CNBC that the White House doesn’t want the potential assistance to be perceived as a bailout. White House declined to comment.” [CNBC, [3/11/20]](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/11/oil-lobbyists-met-with-white-house-staffers-amid-opec-price-war-coronavirus.html)

* **Senior Administration Official Said the Shale Industry Would Probably be Included in Aid Package.** “White House officials are alarmed at the prospect that numerous shale companies, many of them deep in debt, could be driven out of business if the downturn in oil prices turns into a prolonged crisis for the industry. The federal assistance is likely to take the form of low-interest government loans to the shale companies, whose lines of credit to major financial institutions have been choked off, three people said. […] A senior administration official said Tuesday the shale industry would probably be included for help but may not be at the top of the list for assistance.” [The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

**President Trump: “Our Great Oil & Gas Industry in Under Seige…”** On March 26, 2020, Donald Trump tweeted, “Our Great Oil & Gas Industry Is Under Under Seige After Having One Of The Best Years In Recorded History. It Will Get Better Than Ever As Soon As Our Country Starts Up Again. Vital That It Does For Our National Security!” [Twitter, [3/26/20](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1243313399284498434)]

* **President Trump: “We Have A Tremendously Powerful Energy Industry In This Country Now. No. 1 In The World. I Don't Want Those Jobs Being Lost.”** [E&E News, [4/9/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062824757)]

### Industry Continued to Find Trump Administration’s Response to Covid “Baffling”

**Some Oil and Gas Industry Representatives Found Interior’s Response to Covid “Baffling.”** “Louisiana's congressional delegation and other oil-friendly senators went to bat for the idea early on (E&E Daily, May 8). But while cuts have been a tool for previous administrations and support for the oil sector is a signature of President Trump's political brand, the topic has proved dead on arrival (Energywire, April 13). ‘It's baffling,’ one oilman familiar with the talks with Interior said Friday. ‘It's absolutely baffling.’” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**Administration Less Willing to Grant Royalty Relief Than Past Hurricane Emergencies.** “Following Hurricane Katrina's pummeling of the Gulf Coast in August 2005 and Hurricane Rita weeks later, the Minerals Management Service — the predecessor to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement — quickly cut the two-step application process for royalty relief down to one and delayed due dates for payment. The offshore industry has asked for something similar due to COVID-19. But experts and former officials say the Trump administration is likely reluctant to boost production due to the global glut of crude and the political tightrope of the recent price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia.” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**Former BSEE Regulator: “Royalty Relief Is Typically Used To Maintain Or Increase Production. It Doesn't Appear To Be The Right Tool To Use In A Period Of Excessive Surplus — Especially When Other Countries Are Being Asked To Reduce Production.”** [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**No Companies Had Applied for Special Case Royalty Relief.** “BSEE has set a "high evidentiary bar" for "potentially limited relief," according to Clearview Energy Partners, a research firm in Washington that published a review paper on the guidance last week. As of Friday, no company had applied for special case royalty relief — the type identified for these circumstances — according to BSEE. The last time the agency granted a special case royalty relief request was last year, one of just two since BSEE was formed in 2011. "Not worth it," said one oil and gas operator on the condition of anonymity.” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA): “At Some Point You Got To Go With The Cards You're Dealt, And If That's The Cards That Have Been Dealt To This Situation, We Just Have To Go With What He Says.”** [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA): “[It's] TBD In The Sense That Bernhardt Tells Me He's Doing Everything He Can.”** “He said it's too early to assess the effectiveness of BSEE's guidance intended to expedite the application process for companies seeking relief. ‘[It's] TBD in the sense that Bernhardt tells me he's doing everything he can,’ Cassidy said. ‘Industry says that they don't think it's going to be fast enough. Bernhardt says, 'Well, nobody's filed an application, but if they do I promise you I will make sure it gets through as quickly as possible.' And now, industry has begun to file applications for royalty relief. So, let's have the conversation again in four weeks.’” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**Source: “If His Administration Doesn't Come To Its Senses And Grant The Broad Royalty Relief It Is Empowered To Grant, This President's Legacy Will Be This: He Sat Idly By While The Independent Oil And Gas Industry Was Irrevocably Destroyed.”** [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/05/11/stories/1063101799)]

**Trump Administration Content to Let Covid Response Be Led by States.** “The Trump administration's plans to offer aid to oil companies at risk of collapsing appear to be waning now that free-fall in crude prices has stopped, according to industry officials. Instead, the administration appears to be content to let states address the fallout of the oil market meltdown that saw oil futures prices briefly sink into negative territory last month amid a glut of supply caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the market share fight between Saudi Arabia and Russia.” [Politico Pro, [5/8/20](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2020/05/white-house-takes-foot-off-gas-on-oil-industry-aid-1933685)]

**Industry Official: “Why This Administration Can Stand Idly By While Entire Sections Of The Oil And Gas Industry Are Cratering Is Mystifying. I'm Glad The President Has Such A Good Relationship With The Saudis Because In A Few Years He Is Going To Be Buying A Lot Of Oil From Saudi Arabia. So Much For American Energy Dominance.”** [Politico Pro, [5/8/20](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2020/05/white-house-takes-foot-off-gas-on-oil-industry-aid-1933685)]

**IPAA VP Lee Fuller: “I Don’t Know If They Haven’t Gotten Anywhere Or If They Just Haven't Gotten Far Enough. They're Working On It. I Don't Know What The Barriers Are.”** “While the industry is hopeful, it’s not yet clear whether tweaks to the Fed’s Main Street lending program will provide much help to mid-size oil and gas companies, said Lee Fuller, executive vice president of government relations with the Independent Petroleum Association of America. Gauging those results will be key for determining whether more aid is needed, he said, but there's no data since the program hasn’t yet begun. “I don’t know if they haven’t gotten anywhere or if they just haven't gotten far enough,” Fuller said. “They're working on it. I don't know what the barriers are.’” [Politico Pro, [5/8/20](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2020/05/white-house-takes-foot-off-gas-on-oil-industry-aid-1933685)]

**Canary LLC CEO Dan Eberhart: “What Congress needs to do is set aside its biases and help all of America's energy companies, whether they produce oil and gas or electricity from solar and wind. These are all American jobs that are on the cutting block.”** “"Helping the oil industry preserve jobs has become a hyperpartisan issue," said Dan Eberhart, CEO of Colorado-based Canary LLC, one of the largest private oil field service companies in the nation and a Republican donor who has urged Trump to aid the industry by lifting tariffs on steel and other manufactured products that the industry uses. "What Congress needs to do is set aside its biases and help all of America's energy companies, whether they produce oil and gas or electricity from solar and wind. These are all American jobs that are on the cutting block.’” [E&E News, [5/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/2020/05/06/stories/1063059553)]

### Elected Officials Proposed Dueling Legislation to Address Fossil Fuel Industry

**Senate Introduced Legislation to Appropriate $3 Billion to Fill Strategic Petroleum Reserve.** “In the Senate, industry allies unveiled bipartisan legislation, S. 3597, to appropriate $3 billion to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). President Trump has called for filling the SPR, but it is a heavy political lift that was left out of earlier COVID-19 relief measures. Lead sponsor Sen. John Hoeven (R-N.D.) said filling the SPR would "help relieve supply pressures and support a vital U.S. industry and its workers.’ The measure is backed by Energy and Natural Resources Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), but also by Sen. Doug Jones, the incumbent Democrat from Alabama who faces a tough reelection fight this fall.” [E&E News, [5/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/2020/05/06/stories/1063059553)]

**House and Senate Bill Would Block White House from Aiding Fossil Fuel Companies.** “Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-Calif.) and 29 other House lawmakers readied legislation today to block the Trump administration from taking steps to support fossil fuel companies. The bill — backed by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and eight other senators — would block the president from using emergency powers to direct loan guarantees, bar new oil reserve purchases, stop royalty relief and enact a permit moratorium during the crisis. ‘It would be unconscionable to bail out big oil and gas corporations with money intended to help families, workers and small businesses survive this global pandemic,’ Barragán said in a statement.” [E&E News, [5/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/2020/05/06/stories/1063059553)]

### Trump Believed Oil “Demand [Was] Coming Back”

**Trump Believed Oil “Demand [Was] Coming Back.”** “President Trump said Friday that oil "demand is coming back" even as industry analysts predicted that global oil production could collapse by the largest amount in history in the next three months. Meeting with House Republicans on Friday, Trump seemed inclined to let markets spark a recovery as parts of the country reopen and demand for crude inches up despite the ongoing pandemic. "You're up to $25, $26 a barrel. And a little bit more, and you're going to save your energy industry, really, because we're No. 1," Trump told the group at a televised White House meeting, as he took praise for his role in a global agreement last month to cut oil production. "And Russia and Saudi Arabia, I got them together, and they came to a good conclusion for us and for them and for everybody. And once that demand goes up, it's going to be great for the energy industry.’” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063103809)]

**Trump: “I Don't Think I've Ever Seen A Combination Like That. So It's Going To Be Very Good. A Lot Of Good Things Happening In Energy.”** “Trump told him oil prices were rising and gasoline prices were dropping. "That's like the best combination I've ever heard," Trump said. "I don't think I've ever seen a combination like that. So it's going to be very good. A lot of good things happening in energy.’” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063103809)]

**Former White House Energy Adviser Mike McKenna: Restoring Demand Was Actual Issue. “**Restoring demand is the real challenge, said former White House energy adviser Mike McKenna. "Absent that, no one in the industry will survive," he said. "That's the core of the problem for the administration in this instance as in others. If they 'help' an industry, they release some of the pressure to resume economic activity. If they don't, they risk further economic dislocation.’” [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063103809)]

### Department of Energy Committed to Filling Strategic Petroleum Reserve

**Department Of Energy Spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes: “Secretary [Dan] Brouillette And DOE Leadership Are Committed To Fulfilling The President's Directive To Fill And Potentially Expand The Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, And Provide Assistance To The American Energy Industry…Subject To Appropriations, DOE Stands Ready To Execute The Storage Of Up To 1 Billion Barrels Of Oil That It Has Been Authorized By Congress To Store.”** [E&E News, [5/11/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063103809)]

### Trump Administration Allowed Loggers to Extend Their Contracts in National Forests by up to 3 Years to Support the Timber Industry During the Pandemic

**Trump Administration Allowed Loggers to Extend Contracts in National Forests to Support the Timber Industry During the COVID-19 Pandemic.** “The Trump administration is allowing loggers to extend their tree-cutting contracts in national forests to support the timber industry during the coronavirus pandemic and to help national forests create jobs after the crisis ends. ‘Having numerous economically viable timber purchasers is also essential as employment and the national economy recovers following the COVID-19 pandemic,’ the U.S. Forest Service said in a Federal Register notice to be published Wednesday.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]

* **The U.S. Forest Service Extended Timber Harvesting Contracts by Up to Two Years for Contracts Issued Prior to April 1 and Loggers in Alaska’s Tongass National Forest Who Have Seen Their Market “Exceptionally Disrupted” Can Extend Contracts for 3 Years.** “The agency is extending timber harvesting contracts by up to two years for contracts issued prior to April 1 in national forests in the Lower 48 states. Loggers in Alaska’s Tongass National Forest, who have seen their market ‘exceptionally disrupted,’ can have their contracts extended for three years.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]
* **Bloomberg Law: The Agency’s Order “May Double The Time Loggers Have To Cut Trees In Some Cases”.** “The average contract length is two years, so the agency’s order may double the time loggers have to cut trees in some cases, according to the notice. ‘A unique combination of world market conditions, the COVID-19 pandemic and a massive bark beetle epidemic in central Europe has created an unprecedented worldwide instability in timber industries and associated markets,’ according to the notice. ‘Mill closures and curtailment of timber harvests under Forest Service contracts appear to be a reflection of market declines over the last 24 months. Due to the complex factors involved, recovery is expected to be a protracted process,’ the notice stated.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]
* **Forest Service Deputy Director Chad Douglas Said the Trump Administration Did Not Consider Timber Harvesting in National Forests as Park of a Post-Pandemic Jobs Program “At This Time.”** “The timber sale contract extensions are in the public’s best interest and ‘support the long-term viability of the timber industry,’ said Chad Douglas, acting deputy director of the U.S. Forest Service’s office of communications. ‘This is not an increase in harvest levels. It’s a way to keep sales viable in an economic downturn, such as what we are currently experiencing,’ he said. When asked whether the Trump administration sees timber harvesting in national forests as part of a post-pandemic jobs program, Douglas said, ‘Not at this time.’ ‘Our focus is to keep a viable forest products industry because it is an economics driver for forest-dependent communities and an important tool for our active management efforts to increase the health and resiliency of national forests,’ Douglas said.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]
* **Bloomberg Law: The Contract Extensions “Come as the Trump Administration is Seeking to Drop All Protections for Alaska’s Tongass National Forest”.** “The timber sale contract extensions come as the Trump administration is seeking to drop all protections for Alaska’s Tongass National Forest under a rule that blocked road-building and timber harvesting in much of the forest. The administration is cutting the number of projects in national forests that would require environmental impact reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act. ‘It’s a very difficult time,’ said Nick Smith, spokesman for the American Forest Resource Council, a forest products industry trade group. ‘The market for lumber is incredibly challenging. That affects the entire supply chain of the forest products industry.’ The group’s members include companies such as Sierra Pacific Industries and Siskiyou Cascade Resources. The Forest Service’s contract extensions will ‘provide some flexibility to allow timber purchasers, including some manufacturers, some flexibility to weather the storm,’ Smith said.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]

### Environmental groups called the Contract Extensions for Loggers a “Back-Door Approach” to Propping Up the Timber Industry Which was Hurt by a Trade War with China.

**Bloomberg Law: Environmental Groups See the Contract Extensions for Loggers “as a Back-Door Approach To Prop Up An Industry Hurt By A Trade War With China” Started by Trump.** “The Trump administration is allowing loggers to extend their tree-cutting contracts in national forests to support the timber industry during the coronavirus pandemic and to help national forests create jobs after the crisis ends. ‘Having numerous economically viable timber purchasers is also essential as employment and the national economy recovers following the COVID-19 pandemic,’ the U.S. Forest Service said in a Federal Register notice to be published Wednesday. Environmental groups see the move as a back-door approach to prop up an industry hurt by a trade war with China started by President Donald Trump.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]

* **Center for Biological Diversity’s Randi Spivak: “Trump provoked a tariff war with China, which resulted in China slapping tariffs on U.S. timber…Now, Under the Guise of COVID, Trump is Trying to Provide Back-Door Relief for a Tariff War He Created.”** “The agency said in its notice that the way it determines timber harvest contract terms has not been able to fully account for both the Covid-19 pandemic and Chinese tariffs imposed on U.S. timber imports during the Trump administration. ‘The effects include disruptions in international trade and interruptions in domestic production, distribution of forest products as well as demand for forest products as a result of national and local COVID-19 containment measures such as ‘stay-at-home’ or ‘shelter-in-place’ orders,’ the Forest Service said in its notice. But Randi Spivak, public lands director for the Center for Biological Diversity, pointed to China. ‘Trump provoked a tariff war with China, which resulted in China slapping tariffs on U.S. timber,’ Spivak said. ‘Now, under the guise of Covid, Trump is trying to provide back-door relief for a tariff war he created.’” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]
* **Former Forest Service Deputy Chief Jim Furnish Called the Contract Extensions “Very Unusual” but “Innocuous.”** “The contract extensions are ‘very unusual’ but ‘innocuous,’ said Jim Furnish, who served as Forest Service deputy chief in the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. Timber contracts have time limits when timber must be removed from national forests, or the contractor loses the right to cut trees, Furnish said. When circumstances occur beyond a timber company’s control, it’s the Forest Service’s responsibility to provide relief, he said. ‘This is a concession to industry so as not to do further harm as related to their contractual obligations,’ Furnish said.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]
* **Wilderness Society’s Josh Hicks: The Administration is Playing Favorites, Being Generous to the Timber Industry While Doing Nothing Yet to Support Other Industries That Rely on National Forests.** “But the administration is playing favorites, being generous to the timber industry while doing nothing yet to support other industries that rely on national forests, including recreation, said Josh Hicks, assistant director for policy and planning for the Wilderness Society. ‘I would like to think that the administration would be trying to find ways to be supportive of all the different stakeholders and members of the public during the pandemic, not making sure that a single industry is being taken care of,’ Hicks said.” [Bloomberg Law, [4/14/20](https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/national-forest-logging-extended-to-support-industry-in-pandemic)]

### Industry Was Frustrated with Interior Department’s Unwillingness to Issue Broad Royalty Relief

**Industry Saw Little Clarity in Trump Administration Royalty Relief Program.** “The Trump administration's guidance for how offshore oil and gas operators can seek royalty relief during the pandemic adds little clarity to a thorny political topic, industry sources say. The Interior Department's offshore regulatory agency, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, ‘anticipates approving’ oil and gas operators' requests for coronavirus-related royalty relief if they meet certain criteria, according to guidance documents released yesterday and obtained by E&E News. But those criteria largely exist already, and the underlying authority is spelled out in federal law.” [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]

**Industry Hoped Interior Secretary Bernhardt Would Directly Intervene to Speed Relief.** “Industry advocates had hoped for more details on how the process would be expedited. Royalty relief mechanisms for offshore operators can take months to years to complete, according to industry. The guidance has frustrated expectations that Interior Secretary David Bernhardt would directly intervene and provide relief. ‘Ultimately, you've got a political problem,’ one source close to the industry discussion said.” [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]

**Democratic Senators Wrote Letter to Interior Opposing Royalty Relief.** “But the issue is a non-starter across the aisle, where royalty relief is seen as a bailout to fossil fuels. ‘We adamantly oppose any plans to eliminate oil and gas operators' royalty obligations,’ a suite of senators led by Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) wrote in a letter to Interior today. The letter — to be signed by Democratic Sens. Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Cory Booker of New Jersey, among others — said royalty relief would siphon important funding from states and, if granted, should coincide with a production moratorium ‘to counteract the oversupply of oil and gas reserves.’” [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]

**Bernhardt Has Reportedly Been Unwilling to Operate Outside Standard Royalty Relief Mechanisms.** “Senate staffers following the issue declined to comment on the BSEE guidance, which they are currently reviewing. Sources say Bernhardt has not been favorable to blanket royalty cuts and has repeatedly encouraged operators to use existing mechanisms for royalty relief, promising to expedite requests.” [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]

* **API Believed Interior Had “Broad Authority” to Cut Royalties.** “Lem Smith, vice president of upstream policy and industry operations at the American Petroleum Institute, said in an email that Interior had ‘broad authority’ to cut royalties under certain criteria.” [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]
* **API VP Lem Smith: “Their Authority Has Traditionally Been Pursued By Operators On A Case-By-Case Basis, Which Appears To Remain The Current Preference Of The Department Of Interior. API Has Long Favored That Any Regulatory Process — Including One For Royalty Relief — Be Equitable, Transparent And Easily Understood.”** [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]
* **Industry Source: “The Sense Of Urgency With The Administration On Assisting The Oil And Gas Industry Is Nonexistent. This Administration Stands Idly By While Large Swaths Of The Industry Are On The Brink Of Failure.”** [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]
* **Industry Source: “We Don't Need Democrats On This Given Existing Authority. We Need President Trump. This Is An Essential Part Of His Coalition, People Up And Down The Gulf Coast That Support This Industry.”** [E&E News, [5/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/05/01/stories/1063021927)]

**BLM Guidance Laid Out Method for Applying for Royalty Relief.** “The BLM guidance, obtained by E&E News and circulated among operators last week, encourages producers to apply for either a suspension of federal leases or a reduced royalty rate from the existing 12.5% of fair market value. Not dissimilar to existing protocols for relief, the guidance lays out instructions for how to apply for relief and what data to include to prove well economics are impaired by the COVID-19 oil crisis. The guidance backs up the Interior Department's stance in recent weeks that operators must apply on a case-by-case basis for reductions in royalties owed to the U.S. government.” [E&E News, [4/27/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2020/04/27/stories/1062988129)]

**BLM Had Five Days to Review Applications.** “BLM has five days to review and make decisions on each application, according to the guidance. The tight time frame is a sticking point for Don Simpson, vice president of the Public Lands Foundation and the BLM state director for Wyoming from 2009 to 2014. The guidance is a "reasonable attempt" to aid industry and keep oil and gas resources from being stranded, he said. But it's going to be difficult for staff to pull off. Simpson said that BLM offices could face a flood of applications — potentially in the thousands for a state like Wyoming — and that it would be unlikely applications would receive more than a cursory review in just five days.” [E&E News, [4/27/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2020/04/27/stories/1062988129)]

**WEA President Kathleen Sgamma: “This Is Not What We've Been Looking For. BLM Is Going To Be Inundated With Case-By-Case Requests.”** “Kathleen Sgamma, executive director of the Western Energy Alliance, said in an email the guidance was more of a reminder of how to apply for aid rather than comprehensive assistance to industry. "This is not what we've been looking for," she said. "BLM is going to be inundated with case-by-case requests." The oil and gas sector needs "comprehensive policy" change right now rather than the "disjointed" approach currently espoused by Interior, she said.” [E&E News, [4/27/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2020/04/27/stories/1062988129)]

### Nine Companies Allowed to Store Oil in Strategic Petroleum Reserve

**Exxon and Chevron Among Companies Allowed to Store Oil in Strategic Petroleum Reserve.** “While pledging to help the smaller operators, the Department of Energy is allowing some of the biggest energy companies in the country to store excess oil in the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, according to sources yesterday. The nine companies that were awarded temporary storage include Atlantic Trading LLC, Alon USA LP, Chevron USA Inc., Energy Transfer, Equinor Marketing & Trading Inc., Exxon Mobil Corp., Mercuria Energy America Inc., MVP Holdings LLC and Vitol Inc. The companies did not respond to calls and emails seeking comment late yesterday.” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

### Federal Reserve Made Changes to Lending Program That Gave Small and Mid-Size Oil and Gas Groups Access to Financing

**Federal Reserve Lending Program Changes Would Allow Small and Mid-Size Oil Companies to Get Financing.** “Changes to a new lending program from the Federal Reserve have paved the way for the oil and gas industry to get government financing amid the pandemic. The expanded criteria to qualify for the soon-to-be Main Street Lending Program follows requests from Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and an industry group for small and mid-sized oil producers who said financing was needed to save the industry from bankruptcy. The guidelines released Thursday eased restrictions on borrowing for heavily indebted companies and also allows them to use the loans to refinance existing debts — a departure from the first set of criteria released by the board.” [The Hill, [4/30/20](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/495549-feds-expanded-lending-program-opens-funding-to-oil-and-gas-industry)]

**Oil and Gas Associations Asked Federal Reserve for Lending Program Flexibility.** “Oil associations, meanwhile, have already asked the Federal Reserve for flexibility under a lending program created earlier this month to assist small and medium-size businesses affected by the pandemic. Brouillette said Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell have talked about the loan proposals for Treasury and Federal Reserve funds and that "Mnuchin seems supportive of both approaches." Brouillette said Mnuchin had not made a final decision, "but that's where I think he's leaning, and that's where I think he's going to go." Brouillette said he'd lend his personal and his department's support to both programs, "because I think they're both desperately needed.’” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

**Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX): “Because Of These Restrictions, Small- And Medium-Sized Oil And Gas Companies, Who Desperately Need Liquidity Because Of Massive Demand Disruption Caused By COVID-19 And Foreign Oil Aggressive Overproduction And Price Discounts, Are Unable To Access The Short-Term Liquidity They Need To Avoid Bankruptcy.”** [The Hill, [4/30/20](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/495549-feds-expanded-lending-program-opens-funding-to-oil-and-gas-industry)]

**IPAA: “The Federal Reserve’s Announcement Today Sends A Clear Signal To IPAA Members That The Administration Is Willing To Address Some Of Our Recommendations For Assuring That Producers Have Access To The Main Street Lending Program.”** [The Hill, [4/30/20](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/495549-feds-expanded-lending-program-opens-funding-to-oil-and-gas-industry)]

**Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK): “Whether It’s The President Or Mnuchin Or His Team, There’s A Clear Recognition That This Sector Of The U.S. Economy Is Not Just Important For Alaska Or Oklahoma Or North Dakota Or Texas.”** “Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) told POLITICO that the changes were “clearly a reflection on what we’ve been advocating for” to help the energy industry. “Whether it’s the president or Mnuchin or his team, there’s a clear recognition that this sector of the U.S. economy is not just important for Alaska or Oklahoma or North Dakota or Texas,” he said. “This was unequivocally the sector of the U.S. economy that drove us out of our last recession.’” [Politico, [4/30/20](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/30/feds-expansion-of-lending-program-sparks-oil-bailout-worries-227545)]

**Employee Cap Benefitted ConocoPhillips and Occidental Petroleum.** “Under the emergency program, the Fed will buy the majority of a four-year loan made by a bank to a business, and any losses for the government will be covered by Treasury. Thanks to the changes, companies with up to 15,000 employees or up to $5 billion in annual revenue can now qualify for those loans — up from 10,000 employees and $2.5 billion in revenue. The employee cap is most beneficial to companies like Occidental, which has more than 14,000 on its payroll, and ConocoPhillips, which employed 10,400 people, according to its annual securities filing. While not commenting directly on the program, ConocoPhillips spokesperson John Roper said in an email that the company is “in a pretty advantaged position compared to most of our industry peers” having ended the first quarter “with about $14 billion of liquidity, including $6 billion of available revolving credit facility.’” [Politico, [4/30/20](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/30/feds-expansion-of-lending-program-sparks-oil-bailout-worries-227545)]

### Trump Administration Considered Loans to Oil and Gas Industry

**Trump Administration Considered Offering Two Lines of Credit to Oil and Gas Industry.** “The Trump administration is looking at offering two lines of credit to help the beleaguered oil and gas industry as it reels from historically low prices sparked by the global coronavirus pandemic. Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette outlined the plan in a call Tuesday with the North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC), telling producers that the administration is considering lending facilities with the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve for loans to ‘help the industry through this pandemic.’” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

**Loans May Require Federal Government to Take Partial Ownership.** “No final decisions have been made, but Brouillette said he hopes for a launch "within a day or two," and President Trump said yesterday said he expects assistance to the industry "shortly." The loans would possibly require the government to take partial ownership of companies that seek a loan — as it did when it bailed out U.S. automakers in 2008 — a complication that some oil companies may not want. "We're not going to let anything happen to them," Trump said during a White House meeting. "We're working on that very hard, protecting energy and energy independence." Trump pledged that the industry was "one of the top of the list" for government assistance.” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

* **Trump: “Energy Has Really Helped Me Turn This Country Into The Economic Power That It's Been, And We're Not Going To Let That Go.”** [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

**Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin Believed it Was a “National Security Issue” Rather Than a Bailout.** “Mnuchin, who joined Trump at yesterday's meeting with hotel, resort and restaurant executives to talk about reopening the United States, insisted that the administration is not seeking a "bailout of shareholders" but is looking to support "the national security issue." He noted that the administration is also exploring the possibility of storing additional oil. "We're in touch with lots of people around the world, and the president is determined that we protect the national security interest and the jobs," Mnuchin said. Brouillette, who said he has been talking with Mnuchin almost daily, said they had narrowed down the aid options to "what we feel are the most acute needs.’” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

* **Dan Brouillette: “There Are Some In The Industry Who Are More Needy, Or More In Need Of These Types Of Resources Than Others, That’s A Polite Way To Say That There's A Bunch Of Big Players That Don't Need Access To Government Capital, Because They Have Access To Other Resources.”** [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

**Steve Mnuchin: Trump Administration Was Considering Loans to Oil and Gas Companies.** “Appearing on "Fox News Sunday," Mnuchin was pressed on whether the Trump administration would "bail out" oil companies despite critics who say that many of the problems facing the industry are of their own making. "Let me be very clear, the president has said no bailouts to any companies, whether that was airlines or oil companies. We will consider again loans to companies in a proper scenario with strategic importance, but no bailouts. No shareholder bailouts," Mnuchin said. When asked specifically whether loans to oil companies were under consideration by the Trump administration, Mnuchin added that they were. "The secretary of Energy and I are studying it, and we're looking at it," he said.” [E&E News, [4/27/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/27/stories/1062981433)]

**Trump Administration Didn’t Want Regulators to Pressure Regional Banks Into Calling in Loans to Oil and Gas Industry.** “Brouillette said he's also asked Mnuchin to work with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency to ensure that regulators do not impose "undue" pressure on smaller, regional banks to call in oil and gas industry loans. "Now is not the time to be asking the borrowers in the energy industry for additional equity, with prices being what they are," he said.” [E&E News, [4/30/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/30/stories/1063007983)]

### Trump Signaled Lack of Support for Ending Royalty Payments for Oil and Gas Production on Federal Lands and Waters As Interior Department Began Processing Royalty Relief Requests

**Trump Told Aides He Did Not Support Ending Royalty Payments for Oil and Gas Production on Federal Lands.** “President Donald Trump has told aides he doesn’t support a broad plan to temporarily stop charging energy companies royalties for oil and gas produced on federal lands and waters, according to two people familiar with the matter. Trump ruled out a wide-ranging royalty relief proposal during a White House meeting Tuesday, according to the people, who asked not to be named describing a private discussion.” [Bloomberg, [4/8/20](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-08/trump-tells-aides-he-opposes-cutting-oil-company-royalties?utm_source=1500+CWP+List+Daily+Clips+and+Updates&utm_campaign=e4bb78c5a4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_08_08_56&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4369a4e737-e4bb78c5a4-84231621)]

**Interior: One Company Has Begun Formal Process to Request Royalty Relief.** “The U.S. Interior Department said on Wednesday that one oil company had begun the process of requesting relief from royalty payments on its offshore production as the industry reels from slumping prices. Lawmakers representing U.S. Gulf Coast states have asked Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to cut the royalty rate oil and gas companies must pay on their offshore drilling operations temporarily to counter the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, which has reduced demand for fuel and crushed prices.” [Reuters, [4/8/20](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-oil-usa-royalties/u-s-interiors-bernhardt-promised-royalty-cuts-for-offshore-drillers-lawmaker-idUSKCN21Q3AL?utm_source=1500+CWP+List+Daily+Clips+and+Updates&utm_campaign=e4bb78c5a4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_08_08_56&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4369a4e737-e4bb78c5a4-84231621)]

* **U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA): “[Interior Secretary David Bernhardt] Promised To Quickly Process Targeted Royalty Relief On The Outer Continental Shelf Using Existing Law.”** [Reuters, [4/8/20](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-oil-usa-royalties/u-s-interiors-bernhardt-promised-royalty-cuts-for-offshore-drillers-lawmaker-idUSKCN21Q3AL?utm_source=1500+CWP+List+Daily+Clips+and+Updates&utm_campaign=e4bb78c5a4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_08_08_56&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4369a4e737-e4bb78c5a4-84231621)]

**NOIA President Erik Milito: “Royalty Relief Would Be The Quickest Way To Help Ensure That Offshore Energy Companies, Especially The Service And Supply Companies That Make It All Work, Are Able To Weather This Storm And Keep Energy Flowing.”** “Royalty relief would be the quickest way to help ensure that offshore energy companies, especially the service and supply companies that make it all work, are able to weather this storm and keep energy flowing,” said Erik Milito, president of the National Ocean Industries Association, in a statement Wednesday to the Washington Examiner. “There is a severe risk that many companies and thousands of workers along the Gulf Coast will disappear forever.’” [Washington Examiner, [4/8/20](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/industry-officials-say-trump-administration-rebuffed-requests-for-oil-royalty-payment-relief)]

### Trump and Large Oil and Gas Companies Rejected Calls to Reduce Production

**Trump Rejected Calls to Reduce Production; Suggested He Has a “Lot of Good Options, Beauties.”** “President Trump rejected calls yesterday for the United States to trim oil production ahead of an OPEC meeting today, saying the coronavirus pandemic has already forced the U.S. industry to dial back production. But Trump insisted that the two warring parties — Russia and Saudi Arabia, which he blames for the oil glut — would settle their differences, and that if they don't, he still has "a lot of options, a lot of good options, beauties. I might like it even more." He did not elaborate. "Hopefully, they can make a deal," he said at a White House briefing.” [E&E News, [4/9/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062824757)]

* **President Trump: “It Doesn't Make Sense That They Flooded The Market — For Whatever Reason, They Did That For Themselves; It's An Argument That They Had, And I Think They Will Straighten It Out.”** [E&E News, [4/9/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062824757)]

**Trump On Production Cuts: “Maybe We Will, Maybe We Won’t. We'll Have To Make That Decision.”** “Trump's remarks came as reporters asked him about a Reuters report that major global oil producers would be likely to agree to cut production if the United States joins the effort. Trump said he hadn't heard about the request for the United States to chip in, but he didn't take it off the table. "Maybe we will, maybe we won't," he said. "We'll have to make that decision." Trump argued that automatic cuts have already happened in the U.S. markets as companies have slashed billions in spending across the industry as crude prices tanked and demand dried up.” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/07/stories/1062807517)]

**API CEO Mike Sommers: “We Think That's The Right Way To Handle This," Sommers Said. "The Market Should Be Dictating These Solutions, Not Doing It Through Some Kind Of Government Dictate.”** “The American Petroleum Institute, which represents major oil producers, said yesterday that the United States doesn't operate like Russia or Saudi Arabia, where there is a sole oil company. "We have over 9,000 producers in this country, and we live in a situation where one president or one leader can't say, 'Stop producing American oil,'" API President Mike Sommers said on CNN. He said producers are already reacting to market demand and that by some estimates, 25% to 30% of American oil is going offline as a result of lower energy prices. "We think that's the right way to handle this," Sommers said. "The market should be dictating these solutions, not doing it through some kind of government dictate.’” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/07/stories/1062807517)]

**Energy Secretary Had “Productive Discussion” With Saudi Counterpart.** “Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette also said yesterday that he had a "productive discussion" with his Saudi energy counterpart, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, about the instability in global oil markets. Brouillette said the two agreed to keep talking through a meeting of Group of 20 energy ministers "in the near future," DOE said in a summation of the call. Brouillette said he "reiterated that what began as a dispute between Saudi Arabia and Russia has major implications for the United States and the world," according to DOE.” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/07/stories/1062807517)]

### Trump Went Back and Forth on Support for Tariffs

**Trump Initially Suggested He Would Side With Big Oil Companies and Oppose Tariffs.** “A day earlier, however, Trump suggested he was unlikely to impose tariffs, which are fiercely opposed by the big oil companies, which want little government intervention. "These are great companies, and they'll figure it out; it's a free market," Trump said after the White House meeting Friday with the chief executives of Chevron Corp., Exxon Mobil Corp. and others. "We'll figure it out.’” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062798751)]

* **Trump Suggested He Would Support Tariffs One Day Later.** “Then yesterday, Trump reiterated that he'd "absolutely" consider tariffs if oil prices remain in the cellar, arguing that it would save "tens of thousands of jobs." But he added that he didn't think he would have to, because the current price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia is "very bad for them.’” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062798751)]
* P**resident Trump: “If I Have To Do Tariffs On Oil Coming From Outside, Or If I Have To Do Something To Protect Thousands And Tens Of Thousands Of Energy Workers And Our Great Companies That Produce All These Jobs, I'll Do Whatever I Have To Do.”** [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062798751)]

**Energy Secretary Brouillette On Tariffs: “All Options Are On The Table.”** “Asked about Trump's willingness to impose tariffs, Brouillette said, "All options are on the table. "The president made that very, very clear," he added. "For those who would take a predatory advantage of the U.S. market, the president will react accordingly.’” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/07/stories/1062807517)]

**API CEO Mike Sommers: “No One Wins In A Price War, And The Saudis And The Russians Aren't Benefiting From Their Decisions. We Also Urged The Administration To Avoid U.S. Policies That Could Do More Harm Than Good For American Producers.”** “But companies and their lobby groups have so far maintained their desire for a more diplomatic solution to the historic oil glut resulting from a Russian-Saudi price war and reduced demand because of the coronavirus pandemic. “No one wins in a price war, and the Saudis and the Russians aren't benefiting from their decisions," said American Petroleum Institute President and CEO Mike Sommers. "We also urged the administration to avoid U.S. policies that could do more harm than good for American producers." That emphasis on minor policy tweaks — and a broader focus on diplomatic intervention — is a departure from more drastic policy maneuvers proposed by some of the most vocal lawmakers hailing from oil-reliant states.” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1062798637)]

**U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND) Suggested Trump Was “Quite Bullish” on Tariffs.** “In a video posted after the meeting with Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) said Trump told the group that he is "1,000%" for the industry and was looking to it for ideas and solutions. On tariffs, Cramer said Trump "was quite bullish, if that's what it comes to." Sullivan added that he and Cramer told the president they plan to continue efforts in the Senate to remove U.S. military forces from Saudi Arabia if it doesn't pull back production, accusing the "so-called" U.S. ally of "hurting the constituents that we represent." [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1062798637)]

**Harold Hamm Appreciated Trump’s “Friendship” With Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Russian President Vladmir Putin.** “Another attendee, Harold Hamm, a Trump backer whose company, Continental Resources Inc., does business in the Bakken Shale in North Dakota, told Trump he was appreciative of the "friendship" Trump has nurtured with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and with Putin. Hamm has called for an investigation into what he's called Saudi Arabia's "illegal" dumping of crude that sent oil prices into a tailspin. "I know those haven't been easy sometimes, but at this time, it was particularly needed," Hamm said. Trump assured Hamm that "Putin and the crown prince want something to happen badly," adding that the situation was "certainly terrible" for the two countries.” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1062798637)]

### Trump Administration Searched for Methods of Storing Excess Oil Including Leasing Storage Space in Strategic Petroleum Reserve

**Bipartisan Group pf Lawmakers Introduced Legislation to Give Department of Energy $3 Billion to Purchase Crude Oil to Fill Strategic Petroleum Reserve.** “A bipartisan group of lawmakers from both chambers introduced legislation today to make available $3 billion for the Department of Energy to purchase crude oil to fill the available space in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. If enacted, the bill would provide the necessary funds to accomplish one of the few palatable policy options put forward by the Trump administration to ease economic pressure on the oil industry under siege from weak demand and a supply glut.” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062813789)]

* **U.S. Senator John Hoeven (R-ND): “Purchasing U.S. Oil For The SPR Will Not Only Benefit Our Energy Producers, But Also Taxpayers And Our National Security.”** [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062813789)]
* **IPAA Thanked Senators for Legislation.** [Twitter, [4/7/20](https://twitter.com/IPAAaccess/status/1247638128908787714)]

**Trump Suggested Administration Would Lease Storage Space in Strategic Petroleum Reserve.** “Trump also told attendees that the administration will lease storage space in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The administration failed to get $3 billion to purchase oil in the congressional coronavirus relief package that passed late last month, and Trump suggested to lawmakers that Congress try to pass it in stand-alone legislation. Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said that his department was "moving very aggressively" to assist oil producers, and that Trump told him to find other places for the government to store oil, beyond the underground salt caverns at four sites along the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico.” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1062798637)]

**Energy Secretary Brouillette Planned to Meet With Energy Ministers from 20 Industrialized Nations and Find Space to Store Excess Oil.** “The meeting of energy ministers from the 20 industrialized nations could happen as soon as this week, Brouillette added in an interview yesterday with Fox Business. He said he'd continue to look for space to store excess oil, as Trump directed him to do Friday at the White House. Congress rejected the administration's request for $3 billion to purchase oil to store in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but Brouillette said the department is authorized to reserve up to a billion barrels. "We're going to work with the Congress, we're going to continue that conversation on the Hill and pursue this opportunity, because it's just a great opportunity for the taxpayer right at the moment, at oil prices being where they are, it's a great time to fill this petroleum reserve," he said.” [E&E News, [4/7/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/07/stories/1062807517)]

### GOP Senators Lobbied Trump Administration for Loans

**Seventeen GOP Senators Called for Loans to Be Available to Oil and Gas Industry.** “Republican senators are pressing the Trump administration to ensure that hundreds of billions of dollars in federal loans are available to struggling oil and gas companies. Seventeen GOP senators made the plea yesterday to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, calling for the $454 billion in loan assistance to "distressed sectors" enacted last month be made widely available. "Industries, like the energy and transportation sectors are facing significant economic challenges as the demand for products and services have dropped with the constraints on the economy," wrote the group, led by Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) and Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.). "We urge you to ensure that the financial relief offered under the CARES Act is fully available to companies throughout the economy," they wrote.” [E&E News, [4/8/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1062821207)]

**Republicans Wanted to Ensure BlackRock Would Not Administer Bond-Purchasing Aspects.** “Additionally, Republicans want the Federal Reserve to make clear that BlackRock Inc. — which will administer bond-purchasing aspects of the stimulus overseen by the Fed — will not be influenced in that role by the pro-climate policies it announced earlier this year. Environmentalists have already pressed the world's largest asset manager to consider climate in executing the stimulus loan program (Climatewire, March 26). "BlackRock must act without regard to this or other investment policies BlackRock has adopted for its own funds," they wrote.” [E&E News, [4/8/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1062821207)]

### GOP Elected Officials Threatened to Withdraw Military from Saudi Arabia

**U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) Suggested a U.S. Military Pullout in Saudi Arabia.** “Sens. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) and Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) have looked to pressure the Saudis to cut production by threatening their access to the U.S. market and military protection. They and other lawmakers have fired off repeated letters, and their efforts culminated with legislation that would require the military pullout of Saudi Arabia if it were to refuse to back down from overproducing (E&E News PM, March 27). "We have a great military that's protected Saudi Arabia for decades," Sullivan said during the summit. "And Sen. Cramer and I have some legislation that could possibly change that if they don't start cooperating.’” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1062798637)]

**48 U.S. Representatives Signed Letter Threatening to Withdraw Military from Saudi Arabia.** “House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) led a letter to Saudi Arabia today threatening to pull support for a U.S. military presence there should the country continue to flood the world with excess oil production. The letter, which included signatures from 48 Republicans, comes a day ahead of a highly watched OPEC meeting where the cartel is expected to discuss potential production cuts. Citing previous votes critical of American involvement with Saudi-backed military conflicts, the lawmakers suggested they would support efforts to pull the U.S. away from providing military aid to Saudi Arabia without a return to responsible oil production.” [E&E News, [4/8/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1062822565)]

### EPA Has Not Issued Any “Essential Critical Infrastructure” Waivers Yet

**EPA Suggested They Had Not Issued Any Waivers Yet.** “EPA has not issued any waivers for "essential critical infrastructure" that cannot comply with environmental enforcement during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Critics have charged that EPA gave industry a free pass to pollute and have called on the agency to be more transparent about its recent enforcement policy changes. As of Friday afternoon, EPA says it has not issued any waivers of noncompliance to industry.” [E&E News, [4/6/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/06/stories/1062803929)]

### White House Had Meetings and Calls with Fossil Fuel Interests Seeking Federal Aid

**Oil and Gas CEOs Expected to Attend Meeting at White House on April 3, 2020.** “President Trump is set to meet Friday with the heads of some of the largest U.S. oil companies to discuss government measures to help the industry weather an unprecedented oil crash, people familiar with the matter said. The meeting is to take place at the White House and will include Exxon Mobil Corp. Chief Executive Darren Woods, Chevron Corp. Chief Executive Mike Wirth, Occidental Petroleum Corp. Chief Executive Vicki Hollub and Harold Hamm, executive chairman of Continental Resources Inc., the people said.” [Wall Street Journal, [4/1/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-to-meet-with-oil-ceos-about-helping-industry-11585763413)]

* **Industry Executives Expected to Discuss Potential Relief Including Oil Import Tariffs and Jones Act Waiver.** “Mr. Trump and the executives are set to discuss potential aid to the industry, including tariffs on oil imports into the U.S. from Saudi Arabia, and a waiver of a law that requires American vessels be used to transport goods, including oil, between U.S. ports, according to two of the people.” [Wall Street Journal, [4/1/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-to-meet-with-oil-ceos-about-helping-industry-11585763413)]
* **Industry Executives Hoped Trump Would Understand Gravity of Situation.** “The goal is to convince Trump of the gravity of the situation in the oil industry and to encourage him to push Saudi Arabia to back off increased oil production, according to a source. The price war between top oil producers Russia and Saudi Arabia has sent prices plunging, but Trump suggested yesterday there’s an easy fix: ‘I think that they will work it out over the next few days,’ he said of the two countries. ‘It’s too simple not to be able to.’” [E&E News, [4/2/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/02/stories/1062763805)]
* **Small Oil Companies Likely to Push for Aggressive Federal Action.** “Smaller U.S. shale companies, many of which are deeply in debt, are asking for aggressive federal action to halt the flow of foreign crude into the United States that is making their reserves uneconomic to tap. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has set off a fierce price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia that has flooded the global market with oil and sent the price per barrel into free fall, down by more than 60 percent since the start of the year.” [Washington Post, [4/2/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-energy-202/2020/04/02/the-energy-202-oil-executives-to-meet-with-trump-to-discuss-price-crash-during-coronavirus-pandemic/5e84c860602ff10d49ada596/)]
* **Large Companies May “Weather the Economic Head Winds.”** “But a larger group of more diversified oil companies, most of which can better weather the economic head winds, say they do not want the federal government to try to save their industry by constraining supply. In particular, refineries along the Gulf of Mexico do not want to lose access to the heavy foreign crude they are best suited for turning into gasoline and other fuels. ‘That is an example of a policy that can make an already bad situation worse,’ said Chet Thompson, head of the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, which represents the U.S. refining sector. AFPM and the American Petroleum Institute penned a letter to Trump on Wednesday emphasizing that the fall in prices has more to do with downturn in demand for gasoline and other finished fuels than an oversupply of crude.” [Washington Post, [4/2/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-energy-202/2020/04/02/the-energy-202-oil-executives-to-meet-with-trump-to-discuss-price-crash-during-coronavirus-pandemic/5e84c860602ff10d49ada596/)]
* **Oil And Gas Trade Group Source: “We Have A Massive Relief Package. We Need To Be In The Sandbox.”** “‘We have a massive relief package. We need to be in the sandbox,’ said a source at an oil and gas trade group. This may particularly be the case given the differences of opinion on various policy initiatives to assist oil and gas. The White House push to buy oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, for example, may be reprised, along with requests for royalty relief (E&E Daily, March 26). The industry likely won’t present a united front. The push and pull could get ‘messy,’ the source said.” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/04/01/stories/1062754849)]

**Washington Post: “White House is Strongly Considering Pushing Federal Assistance For Oil And Natural Gas Producers Hit By Plummeting Oil Prices Amid The Coronavirus Outbreak”.**  “The White House is strongly considering pushing federal assistance for oil and natural gas producers hit by plummeting oil prices amid the coronavirus outbreak, as industry officials close to the administration clamor for help, according to four people familiar with internal deliberations. President Trump has touted the growth of oil and natural gas production under his administration, celebrating their rise in politically crucial swing states such as Pennsylvania. But many oil and gas firms were hammered Monday by the price war that broke out between Saudi Arabia and Russia, driving oil prices down in their steepest one-day drop in almost 30 years.”[The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

**“Trump and Advisers Have Been Taking Calls Since Monday From Concerned Energy Sector Allies…”** “Trump and advisers have been taking calls since Monday from concerned energy sector allies, who have voiced concern and at times exasperation not only about oil prices, but also privately warning against the administration supporting any sweeping paid sick leave policy, according to a major GOP donor and a White House official familiar with the discussions. These people spoke on the condition of anonymity to candidly discuss private conversations.” [The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

**March 11: “Lobbyists Representing the Oil and Gas Industry Met with White House Policy Staffers to Discuss Coronavirus.** “Lobbyists representing the oil and gas industry met with White House policy staffers Wednesday morning to discuss coronavirus, the state of the economy and the market, a representative for the American Petroleum Institute told CNBC. The meeting comes as the market has been roiled by fears of coronavirus and deteriorating OPEC talks. After negotiations between OPEC and Russia fell apart on Friday, OPEC’s de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday slashed its oil prices and announced plans to increase production. This led to a selloff in oil markets and pressure on U.S. energy producers.” [CNBC, [3/11/20](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/11/oil-lobbyists-met-with-white-house-staffers-amid-opec-price-war-coronavirus.html)]

* **American Petroleum Institute, Which Participated in the Meeting Claimed They Lobbied Against Helping Companies Suffering from a Collapse in Crude Prices.** “The largest U.S. oil and gas trade group participated in a meeting at the White House Wednesday and lobbied against intervention by the federal government to help companies suffering from a collapse in crude prices. ‘We are not advocating for any form of policy relief at this time,’ said Bethany Aronhalt, a spokeswoman for the American Petroleum Institute, who confirmed the meeting to the Washington Examiner. ‘Our focus is on ensuring the free market works.’ Aronhalt said several member company representatives also attended the meeting with White House policy staff, but she did not disclose which ones.” [Washington Examiner, [3/11/20](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/largest-oil-trade-group-lobbies-in-white-house-meeting-against-policy-relief-for-price-crash)]

### After “Onslaught of Requests” From Businesses and State Regulators, EPA Planned to Waive Compliance Requirements on Fossil Fuel and Utility Industries

**EPA Planned to Waive Compliance Requirements for a Range of Industries, Including Oil Refiners, Water Utilities and Sewage Plants.** “The Environmental Protection Agency is planning to waive compliance requirements and deadlines for a range of industries, including oil refiners, water utilities and sewage plants, as it seeks to help businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic, according to Trump administration officials. The biggest change likely will be to waive or postpone coming deadlines to switch to cleaner-burning summer-grade gasoline, according to administration officials and a business lobbyist. Several states have already issued waivers or said they won’t enforce them, an analyst said. And many have asked EPA to step in to clarify nationally, according to one administration official.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/24/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-plans-to-waive-some-compliance-requirements-amid-coronavirus-crisis-11585072822)]

**Wall Street Journal: EPA Had an “Onslaught of Requests from Businesses and State Regulators Seeking Help.”** “The EPA is preparing to act following an onslaught of requests from businesses and state regulators seeking help, according to the administration officials, who expect the decision to be announced this week. Any action is expected to be scrutinized by environmental groups concerned that the EPA and business groups will take advantage of the situation to skirt environmental regulations. Under President Trump, the EPA has moved to amend environmental policies that the White House views as overly harmful to business.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/24/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-plans-to-waive-some-compliance-requirements-amid-coronavirus-crisis-11585072822)]

**American Petroleum Institute Sent a Letter to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler Asking for Blanket, “Temporary Relief” Through Enforcement Discretion, Waivers, and Delayed Deadlines.** “The oil industry’s largest trade group, the American Petroleum Institute, sent a letter to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Monday asking for blanket, ‘temporary relief’ for the whole industry through enforcement discretion, waivers and delayed deadlines. The uncertainty of the pandemic has limited what API members can do, the organization said at the start of a seven-page list of tasks those companies may have trouble completing while employees work from home, including lab testing, wastewater monitoring, and cleaning up contaminated soil and groundwater. ‘Individual company requests for relief would be burdensome to file and track and a more holistic approach may be necessary in an unprecedented situation such as the one we are facing,’ wrote Frank Macchiarola, the group’s senior vice president of policy, economics and regulatory affairs. ‘Nonetheless, industry will make efforts to comply with requirements, but obviously the situation may limit some activities.’ ” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/24/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-plans-to-waive-some-compliance-requirements-amid-coronavirus-crisis-11585072822)]

* **The Hill: API Executives Wrote to Both President Trump and the EPA.** [The Hill, [3/23/20](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/489128-oil-industry-group-asks-trump-administration-to-lessen-regulations)]

**Wall Street Journal: “The Agency May Delay Many Deadlines At Cleanup Sites It Oversees Across The Country, According To Administration Officials And A Lobbyist.”** “The agency may delay many deadlines at cleanup sites it oversees across the country, according to administration officials and a lobbyist. How far the EPA will go isn’t clear; according to one of the officials, the EPA is working to determine whether that would include sites in the Superfund program, which manages places highly contaminated by lead, asbestos, radiation and other pollutants that can cause cancer, birth defects and other health and environmental harm.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/24/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-plans-to-waive-some-compliance-requirements-amid-coronavirus-crisis-11585072822)]

**Wall Street Journal: EPA “Also Considering Whether To Give More Discretion To State Regulators Enforcing the Clean Water Act”.** “The agency is also considering whether to give more discretion to state regulators enforcing the Clean Water Act, that official said. Several states are looking to the EPA for specifics of how to deal with water utilities and wastewater plants, said Julia Anastasio, executive director of The Association of Clean Water Administrators, which represents the state agencies that oversee sewage treatment plants and industrial facilities that discharge wastewater. States are having those facilities report to them on what they can’t do, and have seen virus preparations make it difficult for facilities to hand-deliver lab samples, monitor water intakes and do other tasks required by clean-water rules, she said.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/24/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/epa-plans-to-waive-some-compliance-requirements-amid-coronavirus-crisis-11585072822)]

**E&E News: American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) Was “Engaging With Regulators To Proactively Identify Rules That Could Benefit From Flexibility...”** “The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), a refinery trade group, ‘is engaging with regulators to proactively identify rules that could benefit from flexibility, including reporting deadline extensions,’ a spokesperson said today. ‘In many instances, employees responsible for reporting are now working remotely and auditors are restricted from travel.’ Like the American Petroleum Institute (API), another oil industry trade group, AFPM is also asking EPA to consider waiving summertime limits on gasoline volatility, which are intended to reduce smog.” [E&E News, [3/24/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1062690723)]

**E&E News: National Mining Association Pitched a Coal Industry Aid Package to Trump, Members of Congress; NMA Wanted to Cut Black Lung Benefit Taxes, Abandoned Mine Land Fee and Federal Royalty Payments.** “The National Mining Association last week pitched a coal industry aid package to Trump, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). NMA wants federal help fixing a cash flow problem that the group says threatens 81,000 coal mining jobs. The group also urged Congress to slash rates of the tax covering black lung benefits for sick miners whose former companies have gone bankrupt, to temporarily halve the Abandoned Mine Land fee, and suspend or reduce federal royalty payments. ‘In a perilous time, the essential work of our coal miners to produce the fuel to keep the lights on and homes warm and the certainty and security provided by coal power is just what we need to keep the country moving forward,’ NMA President and CEO Rich Nolan wrote (Energywire, March 20).” [E&E News, [3/24/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1062690723)]

**E&E News: American Chemistry Council Asked Trump and 50 Governors to Allow Them to Continue Working During the Crisis.** “Chemical and fertilizer makers’ main request so far has been to keep working during the crisis. The White House has advised no gatherings larger than 10 people, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is encouraging people to engage in social distancing, among other measures. ‘While many of these limitations are currently in the best interest of public health, it is essential that key industries and sectors, including the chemical manufacturing sector, are able to maintain operations throughout this challenging time,’ American Chemistry Council CEO Chris Jahn wrote last week in a letter to Trump and 50 governors (E&E News PM, March 18).” [E&E News, [3/24/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1062690723)]

### EPA Suspended Enforcement of Environmental Laws During COVID-19 Pandemic, Leaving the Fossil Fuel Industry to Police Itself during a Historic Public Health Crisis

**EPA Suspended Enforcement of Environmental Laws During the COVID-19 Outbreak, “Signaling to Companies They Will Not Face Any Sanction for Polluting the Air or Water of Americans.”** “The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suspended its enforcement of environmental laws during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, signaling to companies they will not face any sanction for polluting the air or water of Americans. In an extraordinary move that has stunned former EPA officials, the Trump administration said it will not expect compliance with the routine monitoring and reporting of pollution and won’t pursue penalties for breaking these rules. Polluters will be able to ignore environmental laws as long as they can claim in some way these violations were caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the event of an imminent threat to public health, the EPA will defer to the states and ‘consider the circumstances’ over whether it should intervene.” [The Guardian, [3/27/20](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/27/trump-pollution-laws-epa-allows-companies-pollute-without-penalty-during-coronavirus)]

**The “Enforcement Discretion” Decision Was Announced on March 26th by EPA Assistant Administrator Susan Bodine.** “EPA's top enforcement official today released the agency’s plan for exercising ‘enforcement discretion’ for situations caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. The policy is retroactive to March 13, the date President Trump declared the pandemic a national emergency. The memo by Assistant Administrator Susan Bodine says the agency understands social distancing and other measures could make it difficult to comply with some deadlines and requirements. ‘The agency must take these important considerations into account as we all continue our work to protect human health and the environment,’ Bodine wrote.” [E&E News, [3/26/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1062709381/search?keyword=epa+enforcement)]

**The Guardian: “There is No End Date Set for This Dropping of Enforcement.”** “There is no end date set for this dropping of enforcement. Andrew Wheeler, administrator of the EPA, said that coronavirus had made it difficult for businesses to protect workers and the public while adhering to clean air and water rules. ‘This temporary policy is designed to provide enforcement discretion under the current, extraordinary conditions, while ensuring facility operations continue to protect human health and the environment,’ Wheeler said.” [The Guardian, [3/27/20](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/27/trump-pollution-laws-epa-allows-companies-pollute-without-penalty-during-coronavirus)]

**HuffPost: EPA “[L]eaving the Fossil Fuel, Chemical And Agribusiness Industries To Police Themselves Amid A Historic Public Health Crisis.”** “On Thursday afternoon, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it would suspend enforcement of bedrock clean air and water laws, leaving the fossil fuel, chemical and agribusiness industries to police themselves amid a historic public health crisis. Hours later, the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed a waiver allowing a private company to take over inspection duties at a Tyson Foods beef slaughterhouse.” [HuffPost, [3/27/20](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-epa-coronavirus-environment-deregulation_n_5e7e3227c5b6cb9dc19f6728)]

**“The Relaxation Of Environmental Laws Follows Lobbying from the American Petroleum Institute” But EPA’s Move “Goes Even Further Than” API’s Request.** “The relaxation of environmental laws follows lobbying from the American Petroleum Institute, an oil and gas industry group, which sent the EPA a letter this week calling for the suspension of rules requiring repair of leaky equipment as well as monitoring of pollution. The EPA’s move goes even further than this request, although the regulator said it expects businesses will comply with laws ‘where reasonably practicable’ and that it will not tolerate flagrant, intentional breaches of the law. However, Michael Brune, executive director of Sierra Club, indicated that the move may be challenged in the courts. ‘While there may be no limit to the lengths Trump and Wheeler are willing to go for corporate polluters, there is a limit to what the public will allow,’ Brune said.” [The Guardian, [3/27/20](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/27/trump-pollution-laws-epa-allows-companies-pollute-without-penalty-during-coronavirus)]

**The Guardian: Air Pollution, Which Plants Will Not Have to Monitor Damages the Respiratory System, is Especially Dangerous for At-Risk Populations Who May Become Infected with COVID-19, Which Attacked the Lungs.** “There is particular concern over air pollution emitted by industrial facilities, which are predominantly located in communities with large numbers of low-income people and people of color. Covid-19 attacks the respiratory system, with its spread causing states to scramble for more ventilators to prevent thousands of infected people from dying. The air pollution that industrial plants will not have to monitor damages the respiratory system, which is especially dangerous for already at-risk populations who may also become infected with Covid-19, which attacks the lungs.” [The Guardian, [3/27/20](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/27/trump-pollution-laws-epa-allows-companies-pollute-without-penalty-during-coronavirus)]

**Former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy Said the Decision Amounted to “an Open License to Pollute. Plain and Simple.”** “The EPA’s order drew swift condemnation. The Center for Biological Integrity called it an ‘unconscionable’ priority as the administration refuses to ‘push utilities to help ordinary people struggling to keep their lights and water on.’ Gina McCarthy, who served as EPA administrator during President Barack Obama’s second term, said the decision amounted to ‘an open license to pollute. Plain and simple.’ ‘The administration should be giving its all toward making our country healthier right now,’ McCarthy, who now leads the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a statement.” [HuffPost, [3/27/20](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/trump-epa-coronavirus-environment-deregulation_n_5e7e3227c5b6cb9dc19f6728)]

* **McCarthy: “This Policy, It Didn't Miraculously Happen. It Came About Because This Administration Is Spending More Time Concerned About The Fossil Fuel Industry Than It Is About People And Their Health.”** “‘This policy, it didn’t miraculously happen. It came about because this administration is spending more time concerned about the fossil fuel industry than it is about people and their health,’ Obama-era EPA chief Gina McCarthy said. ‘All I know is that API wrote a letter. And then, not a very long time, and this came out.’” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/01/stories/1062760565)]

**Former Head of EPA Enforcement Cynthia Giles: The Decision is, “An Abdication of EPA’s Responsibility to Protect the Public.”** “The new stance has caused uproar among former EPA officials and environmental groups who warn that the sweeping will pose a further risk to public health amid the pandemic. ‘EPA should never relinquish its right and its obligation to act immediately and decisively when there is threat to public health, no matter what the reason is,’ said Cynthia Giles, who was head of EPA enforcement during the Obama administration. ‘I am not aware of any instance when EPA ever relinquished this fundamental authority as it does in this memo. This memo amounts to a nationwide moratorium on enforcing the nation’s environmental laws and is an abdication of EPA’s responsibility to protect the public.’ A letter sent to the EPA by Giles and a number of other environmental advocates states that while it may be ‘reasonable in limited circumstances’ to relax certain enforcement during the crisis, the blanket waiver of environmental requirements poses a danger to the American public.” [The Guardian, [3/27/20](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/27/trump-pollution-laws-epa-allows-companies-pollute-without-penalty-during-coronavirus)]

**E&E News: Oil Companies are Likely to be Happy with the New Guidance After Urging the Trump Administration to Waive Certain Environmental Testing and Reporting Requirements.** “Oil companies are likely to be happy with the new guidance. The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers and American Petroleum Institute have both urged the Trump administration to waive certain environmental testing and reporting requirements (Greenwire, March 24). Environmental groups have been suspicious, having repeatedly accused the Trump administration of looking for excuses to soften its response to pollution.” [E&E News, [3/26/20](https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1062709381/search?keyword=epa+enforcement)]

### “EPA Gave 17 Examples of Enforcement Requirements They May Not be Able to Reach; 16 Where Pulled from API Letter”

**EPA Gave 17 Examples of Enforcement Requirements They May Not be Able to Reach; 16 Where Pulled from API Letter.** “Specifically, the EPA policy gave 17 examples of categories of compliance obligations that industry might not be able to meet amid COVID-19. Those include reporting and monitoring of air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, wastewater, leaks, sewage, lab tests and others. All but one of the examples was pulled from API's March 23 letter where the oil lobby asked for relief related to "non-essential compliance discretion." The API letter included 28 examples of "physical challenges" with on-site testing, monitoring and reporting requirements.” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/01/stories/1062760565)]

**Letter Used “Critical Infrastructure” Language from API Letter.** “The policy also said the agency could issue "No Action Assurances" for "critical infrastructure" on a case-by-case basis. API President Mike Sommers specifically called the oil and gas industry "critical infrastructure" in his recent letter (E&E News PM, March 26).” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/01/stories/1062760565)]

**API Senior Vice President Frank Macchiarola: API “Pleased EPA Responded To The Concerns Of Several Other Industries — And Our Letter — In A Timely Fashion.”** “API Senior Vice President Frank Macchiarola said in an email that API was "pleased EPA responded to the concerns of several other industries — and our letter — in a timely fashion. There is a national crisis that includes the need to protect our workers while they are providing the nation's fuels.’” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/01/stories/1062760565)]

**API: Policy Suggestions Intended to Help CDC Compliance.** “Macchiarola maintained that the policy was intended to help industry comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention social distancing guidance during the pandemic. "A considerable amount of monitoring involves actual physical measurements in facilities," Macchiarola said. "For example, leak detection contract technicians sign in and out of process units and as they complete their traverses, they come into contact with operators, engineers, and others by necessity." He added that pollution control equipment continues to operate "as our industries [continue] to follow requirements by federal and state programs."” [E&E News, [4/1/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/04/01/stories/1062760565)]

### Industry Interests and GOP Senators Wanted Interior to Relax Leasing and Permitting, Flexibility on Oversight, and Royalty Relief

**American Petroleum Institute Wanted Interior To “[Relax] Leasing And Permitting Considerations," As Well As Training And Auditing Requirements.”** “API, which represents more than 600 members from all segments of the U.S. oil and natural gas industry, targeted five federal agencies in particular that could offer regulatory relief: EPA and the departments of the Interior, Transportation, State and Homeland Security. Sommers suggested that EPA could waive ‘seasonal fuel requirements,’ which are required to limit smog, and ‘routine testing and reporting requirements.’ The Interior Department could relax ‘leasing and permitting considerations,’ as well as training and auditing requirements.” [E&E News, [3/23/20](https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062681809)]

**Western Energy Alliance Requested One-Year Extensions on Drilling Permits and Oil and Gas Leases and Oversight Flexibility.** “Given the pandemic, operators are asking the Bureau of Land Management to press the ‘pause button’ on enforcement and other near-term demands. ‘We’re working on a request regarding compliance requirements, since personnel are stretched thin with the virus disruptions,’ Sgamma in an email yesterday. The alliance also said it would be seeking one-year extensions on two-year drilling permits and 10-year oil and gas leases, as well as potential flexibility on oversight. ‘Since companies are just focused on maintaining the safety of current operations and may not have the personnel to plan and execute new development,’ Sgamma said, ‘a one-year extension on all timelines would provide some compensation for this reduced activity time period.’” [E&E News, [3/26/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/03/26/stories/1062702093)]

**Western Energy Alliance President Kathleen Sgamma: “There's Discussion Of Energy Provisions Such As Royalty And Fee Waivers Being Included, But No Clarity On What Might Make It Into The Phase Four Bill.”** [E&E News, [3/26/20](https://www.eenews.net/energywire/2020/03/26/stories/1062702093)]

**National Ocean Industries Association President Erik Milito: “Royalty Relief Will Help Preserve American Energy Competitiveness, While Ensuring A Fair Return To Taxpayers.”** “Industry, however, praised the action. ‘Royalty relief will help preserve American energy competitiveness, while ensuring a fair return to taxpayers,’ National Ocean Industries Association President Erik Milito said in a statement.” [The Hill, [3/20/20](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/488740-lawmakers-ask-trump-administration-to-help-gulf-oil-and-gas)]

**Eight Republican U.S. Senators Asked Interior Department to Reduce, Delay, or Suspend Oil and Gas Royalty Payments and Consider Lease term Extensions and Production Requirement Suspension.** “Congress is considering a wide array of efforts to ensure our economy continues to function amidst this crisis through industry-appropriate financial resources and regulatory pathways. We hope the Department of the Interior will strongly consider similar efforts to ensure industries operating within the federal estate have the resources and certainty needed to withstand this pandemic. With this in mind, we encourage you to reduce, delay, or suspend the federal royalty payments for oil, gas, and coal to the U.S. Treasury. We also ask that you consider lease term extensions and suspension of production requirements, where appropriate, to help preserve existing energy leases throughout this tumultuous time. To the extent possible, we ask that you preserve the state's share of revenues collected.” [Politico Pro, [3/30/20](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/f/?id=00000171-31db-d911-aff1-bfdb74240000)]

### Trump Ally Harold Hamm, Chair of Shale-Driller Continental Resources, Personally Lobbied the White House and Members of Congress

**Trump Supporter and Continental Resources Founder Harold Hamm, Who is an Adviser to the President, Said He Reached Out to Administration Officials But Had Not Made “Direct” Contact.** “One of the companies hardest hit was Continental Resources, founded by Harold Hamm, a Trump supporter and an adviser to the president on energy issues. It lost more than half of its market value Monday, though it recovered about 8 percent by midday Tuesday. Hamm’s 77 percent personal stake in the company lost $2 billion of its value Monday. Hamm said in an interview Tuesday he had reached out to the administration but had not made ‘direct’ contact. He said that the administration should consider using laws on illegal dumping to prevent Russia and Saudi Arabia from slashing prices of oil sold in the United States. Hamm said the administration should consider ‘any action that the administration might take to protect and preserve American interests at this time from being unfairly disadvantaged by whatever government — and we’re talking governments here, whether it be Russia or Saudi Arabia.’” [The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

* **The Wall Street Journal: Hamm “Among Those Who Personally Lobbied Administration Officials and Members of Congress for the Diplomatic Push” in the Saudi-Russia Oil Price War.** “Harold Hamm, the executive chairman of shale-driller Continental Resources Inc. and the leader of the Domestic Energy Producers Alliance, was among those who personally lobbied administration officials and members of Congress for a diplomatic push, these people said. A spokeswoman for Mr. Hamm said he didn’t seek cooperation with the Saudis and didn’t know about the administration’s outreach strategy.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/19/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-considers-intervention-in-saudi-russia-oil-standoff-11584636054?emailToken=2a44ba5d29832b30fe16041dfc0c2b1fb28svZ8Vkc1GaP2ko+C6N+PG2H++t6pgxeG%2F1szaOPCwPjR%2F8YaQo7a2WS+rEQQMIANOGTQ1MPROFdcaXmE7KlCsMmq5qZHSCYLMnJ1rHOuFktqn3DKL8F8CApv6ELO0&reflink=article_imessage_share)]
* **Forbes: “Hamm, Having Lost Billions In The Downturn, Has Been Lobbying For A Federal Investigation Into Russian And Saudi Illegal Dumping.”** “Hamm, having lost billions in the downturn, has been lobbying for a federal investigation into Russian and Saudi illegal dumping. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggested today that Congress should appropriate $20 billion to essentially buy 1 billion barrels of cheap oil and save it for a rainy day.” [Forbes, [3/19/20](https://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2020/03/19/just-six-months-to-tank-tops-in-race-to-store-up-cheap-oil/#66e335947730)]

### Oil Companies Pressed the Trump Administration to Intervene in Saudi-Russian Oil-Price War

**Wall Street Journal: “Administration Officials Are Exploring A Diplomatic Push To Get The Saudis To Cut Oil Production…** **After U.S. Oil Companies Pressed Them To Intercede”.** “Saudi Arabia moved earlier this month to boost its production rapidly, contributing to a steep drop in oil prices. The Trump administration is considering intervening in the Saudi-Russian oil-price war, and Texas regulators are weighing whether to curtail crude production for the first time in decades, as U. S. producers suffer from a historic crash in prices. Administration officials are exploring a diplomatic push to get the Saudis to cut oil production and threats of sanctions on Russia aimed at stabilizing prices, after U.S. oil companies pressed them to intercede, people familiar with the matter said. Meanwhile, the Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates the oil industry in the state, is examining potential limits on production there after several oil executives reached out to members requesting relief, people familiar with the matter said. ‘We were hoping the Trump administration could use that tool in negotiations with the Saudis and also the Russians,’ said Pioneer Natural Resources Co. Chief Executive Scott Sheffield, who said he has spoken with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and regulators in recent days.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/19/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-considers-intervention-in-saudi-russia-oil-standoff-11584636054?emailToken=2a44ba5d29832b30fe16041dfc0c2b1fb28svZ8Vkc1GaP2ko+C6N+PG2H++t6pgxeG%2F1szaOPCwPjR%2F8YaQo7a2WS+rEQQMIANOGTQ1MPROFdcaXmE7KlCsMmq5qZHSCYLMnJ1rHOuFktqn3DKL8F8CApv6ELO0&reflink=article_imessage_share)]

**Wall Street Journal: “Oil Companies and Their Trade Groups Have Visited With Officials At The White House, Treasury And Commerce Departments Asking For Trump Administration Help.”** “Oil companies and their trade groups have visited with officials at the White House, Treasury and Commerce departments asking for Trump administration help. A ramp-up in diplomatic intervention was one of the most common requests, along with purchases for the reserve, several people familiar with those meetings said. But companies have had different agendas, and different priorities for the administration’s response. Several have been asking the administration to gather its allies in the Group of Seven nations to engage Saudi Arabia with a united front, several people familiar with the discussions said.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/19/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-considers-intervention-in-saudi-russia-oil-standoff-11584636054?emailToken=2a44ba5d29832b30fe16041dfc0c2b1fb28svZ8Vkc1GaP2ko+C6N+PG2H++t6pgxeG%2F1szaOPCwPjR%2F8YaQo7a2WS+rEQQMIANOGTQ1MPROFdcaXmE7KlCsMmq5qZHSCYLMnJ1rHOuFktqn3DKL8F8CApv6ELO0&reflink=article_imessage_share)]

**Trump Supporter and Chairman of Shale-Driller Continental Resources Harold Hamm “Among Those Who Personally Lobbied Administration Officials and Members of Congress for the Diplomatic Push”.** “Harold Hamm, the executive chairman of shale-driller Continental Resources Inc. and the leader of the Domestic Energy Producers Alliance, was among those who personally lobbied administration officials and members of Congress for a diplomatic push, these people said. A spokeswoman for Mr. Hamm said he didn’t seek cooperation with the Saudis and didn’t know about the administration’s outreach strategy.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/19/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-considers-intervention-in-saudi-russia-oil-standoff-11584636054?emailToken=2a44ba5d29832b30fe16041dfc0c2b1fb28svZ8Vkc1GaP2ko+C6N+PG2H++t6pgxeG%2F1szaOPCwPjR%2F8YaQo7a2WS+rEQQMIANOGTQ1MPROFdcaXmE7KlCsMmq5qZHSCYLMnJ1rHOuFktqn3DKL8F8CApv6ELO0&reflink=article_imessage_share)]

**April 2, 2020:** **President Trump Said He Spoke With the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia And Expected Saudi Arabia and Russia Would be Cutting Back Approximately 10 Million Barrels… “Which, If it Happens, Will be Great for the Oil and Gas Industry”.** On April 2, 2020, Trump tweeted: “Just Spoke To My Friend MBS (Crown Prince) Of Saudi Arabia, Who Spoke With President Putin Of Russia, & I Expect & Hope That They Will Be Cutting Back Approximately 10 Million Barrels, And Maybe Substantially More Which, If It Happens, Will Be GREAT For The Oil & Gas Industry!” [Twitter, [4/2/20](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1245720677660925952)]

### After Meeting with Oil and Gas Lobbyists, Trump Pledged to Assist the Oil Industry by Purchasing Between 30 Million-77 Million Barrels of Oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

**POLITICO: The Oil and Gas Industry Pushed the Administration for Strategic Petroleum Reserve Purchases.** “Other examples abound. ‘The oil and gas industry is pushing the administration for [Strategic Petroleum Reserves] purchases, faster drilling permits on federal lands, royalty relief and increased deductions for drilling expenses,’ said Dan Eberhart, an energy executive and major Republican donor. Aside from the suggestion that the administration buy oil for the petroleum reserve as a way to help oil producers — which Trump announced he would do on Friday — the other measures have been part of the industry’s wish list for years.” [POLITICO, [3/16/20](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/03/16/lobbyists-coronavirus-relief-efforts-131541)]

**March 19: Department of Energy Announced It Would Fulfill Trump’s Pledge to Assist the Oil Industry by Buying at Least 30 Million Barrels of Oil from Producers As Prices Plummeted.** “The U.S. government will buy 30 million barrels of oil from producers amid a financial downturn for the industry. The Department of Energy (DOE) announced Thursday it would conduct the sales to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), fulfilling a pledge by President Trump to offer assistance to the oil industry as prices plummet with the twin threats of the coronavirus and a pricing war between Saudi Arabia and Russia. ‘It is a common sense move. Everyone who has done any version of investing knows you try to buy low and sell high. The same goes with filling the SPR over time,’ Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said in a call with reporters. This initial purchase comes as oil has fallen to about $25 per barrel, down from roughly $50 a month ago and a steep decline from the average $60 pricetag for oil already in the reserve. The 30 million barrel purchase announced Thursday is a far cry from Trump’s Friday pledge to fill America’s emergency fuel supply ‘right up to the top,’ maxing out at 77 million barrels.” [The Hill, [3/19/20]](https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/488422-trump-administration-prepares-to-buy-30m-barrels-of-oil-amid)

**DOE Secretary Dan Brouillette Said He asked Congress for $3 Billion to Buy 77 Million Barrels.** “Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said last week he had asked Congress for $3 billion to buy 77 million barrels of oil for the SPR, held in caverns on the Texas and Louisiana coasts. He said the DOE would buy an initial 30 million barrels by the end of June as a first step in fulfilling President Donald Trump’s directive to fill the emergency stockpile to help domestic crude producers.” [Reuters, [3/25/20](https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-oil-spr/update-1-trump-admin-looks-to-buy-oil-for-reserve-out-of-energy-dept-budget-sources-idUSL1N2BI1YD)]

**CNBC: Oil and Gas Lobbyists Met with White House Policy Staffers on Wednesday Prior to Trump’s SPR Purchase Pledge.** “Oil and gas lobbyists met with White House policy staffers Wednesday morning to discuss the administration’s response to the economy, OPEC price war and the coronavirus, a representative for the American Petroleum Institute told CNBC. Meanwhile, the Energy Department had on Tuesday suspended the sale of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve that would have put more oil into the market.” [CNBC, [3/13/20](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/13/trump-asks-energy-department-to-purchase-oil-for-the-strategic-petroleum-reserve.html)]

**Reuters: After the Funding Was Excluded from the $2 Trillion Senate Stimulus Bill, Trump Administration is Exploring Whether it Can Find Money in DOE’s Budget for the Purchase.** “The Trump administration is exploring whether it can find money in the U.S. Department of Energy’s budget to buy oil for the nation’s emergency crude reserve after funding was not included in the $2 trillion stimulus bill the Senate is expected to pass soon, three sources familiar with the matter said. The administration has told energy interests not to worry, that money will be found in the DOE’s budget, one of the sources said, though it was unclear how much money could be arranged that way. The administration prefers that Congress fund the purchase, but that route has been slowed down by lawmakers concerned that it would serve as a bailout for the oil industry.” [Reuters, [3/25/20](https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-oil-spr/update-1-trump-admin-looks-to-buy-oil-for-reserve-out-of-energy-dept-budget-sources-idUSL1N2BI1YD)]

### American Petroleum Institute Praised Administration for Postponing the Sale from Strategic Petroleum Reserve

**DOE Postponed the Start of a Sale from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, Which Would Have Driven Crude Prices Down Further.** “The Energy Department on Tuesday postponed the start of a sale from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which would have driven crude prices down further. Although the reserve once held 727 million barrels, Congress passed legislation that requires the government to sell parts of the reserve at regular intervals to help cover the federal deficit and cover the cost of the reserve’s maintenance and upgrades. ‘Given current oil markets, this is not the optimal time for the sale,’ an Energy Department spokesman said.” [The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

**Wall Street Journal: The Move “Could Provide Some Relief for Battered Oil Markets.”** “With oil prices down sharply, the Energy Department postponed a sale from the government’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve that had been scheduled for Tuesday -- a move that could provide some relief for battered oil markets. The Trump administration is seeking to shore up financial markets hit hard by fears over the coronavirus and an oil glut. Crude prices Monday had their biggest one-day percentage drop since 1991, triggered by a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia as they struggle over dwindling demand from an economic slowdown in China. James Lucier, a managing director at Capital Alpha Partners LLC, said the action fits in with the Trump administration’s plan to shore up financial markets and the broader economy.” [The Wall Street Journal, [3/11/20](https://www.wsj.com/articles/heds-to-flash-11583848098)]

**American Petroleum Institute Chief Executive Mike Sommers: “We Were Pleased That the Administration Decided Not to Begin a Sale of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve”.** “American Petroleum Institute chief executive Mike Sommers said that ‘We were pleased that the administration decided not to begin a sale of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve today. That would have sent a really bad market signal.’ The reserve, which currently holds 635 million barrels, should be held ‘for severe supply disruptions,’ Sommers said.” [The Washington Post, [3/10/20](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/trump-oil-bailout/)]

### During Pandemic, Trump Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Said the U.S. Needed to End Reliance on China and Foreign Nations for Uranium and “Fundamentally Review” Supply Chains

**S&P: Trump Administration’s Effort to Expand Uranium Mining Was Stalled by COVID-19 Response, Frustrating U.S. Uranium Producers That Believed the Crisis May Exacerbate Fault Lines in the Supply Chain for Nuclear Powered Utilities.** “A Trump administration effort to expand the domestic sourcing of nuclear fuel is believed to be stalled amid the government response to the coronavirus pandemic, frustrating U.S. uranium producers that believe the crisis may exacerbate fault lines in the supply chain for nuclear-powered utilities. U.S. uranium producers have been waiting more than two years for relief from the White House. Two Colorado-based uranium miners, Energy Fuels Inc. and Ur-Energy Inc., petitioned the Commerce Department in January 2018 to launch a probe to determine if foreign uranium imports are a threat to national security. In July 2019, after the Commerce Department submitted its findings to the White House, President Donald Trump decided not to take up the recommendations and instead created a Nuclear Fuel Working Group to evaluate the security of the U.S. nuclear fuel supply chain. […] The delay in releasing recommendations is coloring the views of investors in U.S. uranium producers that have yet to see immediate relief under the Trump administration, said Mark Reichman, a senior natural resource analyst with Noble Capital Markets.” [S&P Global, [3/27/20](https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/trump-effort-to-help-uranium-miners-sidelined-by-covid-19-producers-say-57759804)]

**Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Said the COVID-19 Pandemic Showed That the U.S. Needed to Stop Relying on Foreign Nations for Uranium; Pompeo Said “We Need to Fundamentally Review Our Supply Chains…”** “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said today the novel coronavirus reveals why the United States needs to stop relying on China and other foreign nations for uranium and other minerals. ‘We need to fundamentally review our supply chains and make sure that we know those supply chains and have control over them for moments just like this,’ he said on conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt’s radio show this morning. Pompeo defended the Trump administration’s response to the pandemic, including his insistence on calling COVID-19 the ‘Wuhan virus’ despite condemnation from the rest of the Group of Seven of leading industrial nations. Hewitt asked about China’s dominance over supplies of nuclear fuel, citing concerns raised by Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette and Hewitt’s ‘friend’ Daniel Poneman, former deputy Energy secretary under President Obama. […] Pompeo called the problem ‘absolutely critical’ and added rare earth elements. China controls 80% of global supply of the 17 minerals increasingly used in new military and civilian technologies. He said businesses are now realizing the ‘political risk.’” [E&E News, [3/26/20](https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2020/03/26/stories/1062708157)]

### Solar Energy Industries Association and American Wind Energy Association Lobbied Congress for Assistance

**Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) Rallied Members to Reach Out to Federal Legislators For Help Weathering Downturn Amid Coronavirus Pandemic.** “The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) rallied its members on Friday to reach out to their federal legislators in support of policy that will help the sector weather the novel coronavirus pandemic and global economic downturn. The industry supports the extension of renewable tax credits and a bill that would enable low-cost loans for small businesses, including many SEIA members. The loans component, which the House of Representatives passed on March 6, is crucial to the industry association because of its smaller members, Shaun Garrison, SEIA director of congressional affairs, said.” [Utility Dive, [3/23/20](https://www.utilitydive.com/news/solar-developers-launch-lobbying-effort-to-curb-covid-19-impacts-advance-r/574651/)]

**American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) Appealed to Congress on Federal Production or Investment Tax Credits.** “AWEA in its appeal to Congress said that developers of wind energy projects have been moving forward ‘based on what appeared the safe assumption that their projects would qualify for the federal production or investment tax credits, which reduce costs to electricity consumers.’ With those tax credits expiring, delays in completing those projects could push them past deadlines to qualify for the credits. ‘There is a record amount of wind projects under development. Delays caused by COVID-19 will make it difficult for some U.S. wind projects to come online in time to meet financial and economic obligations, putting projects at risk of cancellation,’ said AWEA Vice President of Research and Analytics John Hensley. ‘Decisive government action in the short term can do much to soften the virus’ effects and protect the over 100,000 workers that count on the U.S. wind industry for their livelihood and the consumers that count on wind power for safe, low-cost, zero-carbon electricity.’” [Power[, 3/19/20](https://www.powermag.com/wind-energy-group-says-43-billion-at-risk-from-covid-19/)]

**SEIA and AWEA Sent Joint Letter to Congress Saying That Extending Tax Credits “would allow our member companies to hire thousands of additional workers and inject billions in the U.S. economy.”** “Two trade groups, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), sent a joint letter to members of Congress last week saying that extending the credits ‘would allow our member companies to hire thousands of additional workers and inject billions in the U.S. economy.’ The share of solar and wind energy in the U.S. had been booming. But now, without help, the SEIA estimates the solar industry could see as much as 50 percent of residential solar jobs lost this year due to the pandemic. AWEA estimates $43 billion dollars of investments and payments, mostly in the rural communities where wind projects usually are built, is at risk. ‘The COVID-19 pandemic is harming the wind industry’s ability to build the wind farms envisioned by Congressional legislation and putting at risk 35,000 wind energy jobs,’ says Tom Kiernan, Chief Executive Officer of AWEA.” [NPR, [3/24/20](https://www.npr.org/2020/03/24/820268157/climate-change-push-fuels-split-on-coronavirus-stimulus)]