

February 3, 2021

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As organizations representing millions of members, we write to state our support for President Biden's actions to pause new onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing. With this pause, President Biden is affirming what our organizations and local communities across the country already know: the oil and gas leasing system is broken and has been repeatedly exploited by fossil fuel industry CEOs, directly contributing to the boom-and-bust cycle that threatens local economies and our public lands, waters, wildlife, and coasts.

The last four years have only made this broken system worse, as oil and gas CEOs received giveaways while taxpayers saw little in return except for pollution that threatens our health, our clean water, our coasts, climate, and communities. In directing the Interior Department to halt the issuances of new leases, the Biden-Harris Administration can review the oil and gas leasing system for the first time in nearly four decades and begin to meaningfully address these problems with solutions that work for the public. It is important to note: a leasing pause will have little impact on day-to-day employment in the oil and gas industry because a pause will not affect the operation of existing leases and wells on federal lands. Accordingly, a pause will not have a major economic impact, as production from existing leases and permitted fields will continue and companies shift to state or private lands, but it will stop the firehose of handouts so we can finally fix this broken program.

These are commonsense and urgently needed steps towards creating jobs by restoring our public lands and coasts and building a future where our public lands, waters, and coasts support millions of clean energy and outdoor recreation jobs and generate reliable revenue to fuel local economies and support important state programs. Unfortunately, industry's front groups, like the American Petroleum Institute, and their allies in Congress have churned out misinformation in a desperate attempt to prop up the broken leasing system that is rigged to boost their profits while the public pays the price. Despite these scare tactics, a large majority of Americans support President Biden's commonsense plans to build back better while protecting our public lands, ocean, and climate for future generations. Even President Trump expanded a ban on offshore oil and gas drilling for some states, citing the strong bipartisan opposition from coastal businesses, local elected officials, and residents.

Despite claims to the contrary, the Land and Water Conservation Fund would not be impacted by preventing new offshore drilling. Federal energy revenues make up about \$7 billion and current production revenues, without opening new areas to leasing, fully covers LWCF's \$900 million annual deposits and still leaves an additional \$3 billion a year in the general Treasury.

During the previous administration the US federal government rampantly sold off our public lands to the oil and gas industry while ignoring the enormous amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would result over the next decade. Healthy public lands and waters support valuable local outdoor recreation and tourism economies, give us the opportunity to connect with nature and the many health benefits it provides, and support ample responsible production of renewable energy that can help rebuild communities dependent on fossil fuels, while improving their resilience to climate impact.

We look forward to working with the Biden-Harris administration to address this broken system in meaningful consultation with Tribes, coastal communities, local governments, our organizations, and other constituencies to restore and rebalance our use of public lands and waters. This leasing pause is long overdue, and we applaud President Biden for taking this important first step. As such, we urge you to

oppose any efforts to undermine this commonsense step to protect and restore our public lands, waters, wildlife, and coasts.

Sincerely,

350Hawaii
350 Silicon Valley
350PDX
Accountable.US
Alaska Wilderness League
American Hiking Society
American Littoral Society
American Rivers
Atlantic Coast Conference Climate Justice Coalition
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Bold Alliance
California League of Conservation Voters
Call to Action Colorado
Catholic Divestment Network
CatholicNetwork.US
Clean Water Action
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Law & Policy Project
Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate
Colorado Democratic Party Energy & Environment Initiative
Colorado Wildlands Project
Community for Sustainable Energy
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservation Voters of South Carolina
Defenders of Wildlife
DemCast USA
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Day Network
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environmental Defense Center
Friends of the Earth
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace USA
Healthy Gulf
Healthy Oceans Coalition
Inland Ocean Coalition
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
JAPRI.org

League of Conservation Voters
Maine Conservation Voters
Moms Clean Air Force
Montana Wilderness Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nevada Wildlife Federation
NH Audubon
Ocean Conservancy
Ocean Conservation Research
Oceana
Oil Change International
Pacific Environment
People's Justice Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Pennsylvania
Progressive Democrats of America
Public Citizen
Publish What You Pay-United States
Rapid Shift Network
Revolving Door Project
Rocky Mountain Wild
Save Our Shores
Seven Circles Foundation
Sierra Club
Skokos
South Beach District 6 Democratic Club of San Francisco
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Stand.earth
Surfrider Foundation
The Lands Council
The Ocean Project
The Peoples Justice Council
The Wilderness Society
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Organization of Resource Councils
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Workshop