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Wednesday, August 11, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you concerning the Biden Administration's recent discussions with OPEC+ to increase the supply of oil by expanding production of foreign oil to lower gasoline prices in America.

These discussions tacitly acknowledge the important role of fossil fuels for American families to have access to cheap, plentiful, and reliable energy. While I appreciate your support for increasing the production of oil, quite frankly, we do not need to rely on other countries for natural resources we can produce right here at home.

In recent years, the United States surpassed Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the top producer of oil and natural gas in the world — producing a record 12.4 million barrels of oil in August 2019. Unfortunately, over the last two years, COVID-19, ESG investing, and regulatory uncertainty from the federal government have stripped us of our hard-fought energy independence.

By frequently attempting to weaken the American oil and gas industry you are not reducing emissions, you are merely shipping them overseas while killing American jobs, increasing costs to American consumers, and harming our country's national security. Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy summed it up well when he recently stated that "cutting production in the U.S. only to see that demand met by dirtier producers elsewhere in the world results in more pollution and more environmental damage. Instead, we should be promoting cleaner production here at home." **It is confusing to me why an American president would be so hostile to American industry, jobs, consumers and national security.**

Here's the truth. The environment in the United States is getting cleaner, not dirtier. Over the last fifty years, the six major pollutants regulated by the EPA have fallen by 77 percent while the U.S. economy grew 285 percent and its population by 60 percent (1). While natural gas production increased more than 50 percent between 1990 and 2017, methane emissions from natural gas decreased by more

than 14 percent (2). According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, between 2005 and 2019, total U.S. electricity generation increased by almost 2 percent while related CO2 emissions fell by 33 percent (3).

Meanwhile, China — already the largest carbon emitter on Earth (4) — commissioned more coal-fired electric generation capacity last year than the rest of the world retired (5). More than 50 percent of the raw materials required to make solar panels and wind turbines are now mined in China by power generated from fossil fuels (6). This means wind and solar generated electricity in the United States isn't reducing global carbon emissions, it is just outsourcing them to China.

Mr. President, I implore you to reverse course on your policy decisions and rhetoric regarding American oil and natural gas. “Freezing” new oil and gas exploration on federal lands and revoking the permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline provide negligible environmental benefits compared to its cost. Climate change is not the same thing as a climate crisis, and these public policy decisions are harming real Americans living paycheck to paycheck.

America has proven we do not need to rely on OPEC+ or any other nation for our energy needs. We can produce the natural resources we need right here at home. History has shown us time and time again that oil and natural gas production and a clean environment are not mutually exclusive. America has proven that through technological innovation we can maintain a clean environment AND achieve energy independence.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Christian", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wayne Christian

Railroad Commissioner
State of Texas

Citations:

1. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/2019_baby_graphic_1970.png
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3. https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/carbon/pdf/2019_co2analysis.pdf
4. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/chinas-greenhouse-gas-emissions-exceed-those-of-all-other-developed-countries-combined/#:~:text=The%20Rhodium%20Group%20released%20an,27%25%20of%20the%20global%20total.>
5. <https://globalenergymonitor.org/press-release/new-report-record-coal-plant-retirements-in-u-s-and-eu-offset-by-china-coal-plant-boom-in-2020/>
6. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/Energy-security-fears-rise-anew-in-shift-to-clean-16039857.php>