

November 15, 2021

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

Dear President Biden,

You have promised the most ambitious climate agenda of any U.S. administration. During the first nine months of your administration, you have taken many essential actions to deliver on those promises. We applaud your leadership in rejoining the Paris Agreement, championing historic investments to tackle climate change, drafting policies to embrace clean energy in an equitable way, restoring protections to our National Monuments, canceling the Keystone Pipeline, and reinstating the Obama administration's withdrawal of most of the Arctic Ocean and parts of the Atlantic Ocean from availability for oil leasing.

Your January 2021 announcement of a pause on new federal oil and gas leasing was a critical step forward in winding down a program that, together with the federal coal program, accounts for 25% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and in demonstrating global leadership in the transition away from fossil fuels. But your administration's recent decision to offer massive new oil and gas leases for sale on our public lands and waters is now undermining the climate progress you have made to date.

During your campaign and while in office, you committed to "no new leasing on public lands or offshore." Yet, on November 17th your administration is offering for sale more than 80 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to the fossil fuel industry, at the expense of our health and the health of our planet.

As communities across Southern California continue cleaning up after an oil spill and the Coast Guard grapples with 300 reported oil spills in the Gulf following Hurricane Ida, your Interior Department is greenlighting projects that expose communities to more pollution and move us farther away from meeting critical emission goals. Every single one of those oil spills started with a lease sale. This lease sale locks us into decades of investment in fossil fuels at a crucial time when every investment we make must advance an equitable and just transition to clean energy. This sale alone is projected to produce over 1 billion barrels of oil and 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas over the next 50 years, causing massive greenhouse gas emissions over a timeline we simply do not have.

As illustrated by extreme weather events, rising temperatures, catastrophic wildfires in the West, and devastating floods in the Gulf South, we have no more time to delay the inevitable shift to clean energy. These climate trends and natural disasters will continue at a faster pace and only worsen unless we quickly change course to bring down the amount of carbon we pump into the air. Our most over-burdened communities are already paying the highest price for failures to act on climate change.

The UN Environment Program warns in its most recent study that the United States is currently on track to significantly increase its oil and gas production. We must urgently reverse course for any hope of avoiding the most catastrophic consequences of our increasingly warming planet. Your administration has the authority to set the U.S. on course to meet this imperative, and the crucial first step is to end new fossil fuels leasing. Again, approximately one-quarter of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions come from fossil fuels extracted on federal lands and waters that belong to all Americans. Additionally, the 2021 IPCC report identifies methane pollution as one of the key drivers of the climate crisis. In the United States, oil and gas

production is the largest industrial methane polluter.

We simply cannot meet the climate obligations and goals you have set without taking immediate steps to end our reliance on fossil fuels. We are asking you to deliver on the climate promises you made on the campaign trail — to take immediate, concrete steps to overhaul the federal fossil fuel program and end new fossil fuel leasing. In taking this essential climate action, you will also preserve wildlife habitat onshore and offshore against the backdrop of an accelerating crisis for biodiversity, protect people from deadly air and water pollution in some of the most polluted communities in our country, and achieve better and fairer returns for federal taxpayers who lose out on billions annually in potential revenue from fossil fuel extraction on their public lands and are frequently left on the hook to pay for cleaning up the industry's messes.

We can no longer make promises about climate solutions in the future while expanding fossil fuel development in the present.

Thank you,

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