

January 11, 2022

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

CC: Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau,
Bureau of Land Management Director Tracy Stone-Manning,
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Director Amanda Lefton,
White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi

Dear Secretary Haaland,

President Biden made a bold promise to [ban new oil and gas leasing](#) on public lands and waters, and within days of taking office issued his [Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#). This executive order instructed the Department of the Interior to conduct a “comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices in light of the Secretary of the Interior’s broad stewardship responsibilities over the public lands and in offshore waters, including potential climate and other impacts associated with oil and gas activities on public lands or in offshore waters.”

However, since then, the Biden Administration and Interior’s leadership has fallen short. Interior issued new permits to drill at a [rate faster than the Trump Administration](#) during Biden’s first year in office. The Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management pushed forward with new oil and gas lease sales, including a sale in the Gulf of Mexico that was vacated by a federal court for a faulty environmental review. And Interior’s final report on the leasing program failed to take into account climate impacts from extraction on public lands and waters.

The climate science is clear: Several [analyses](#) show that climate pollution from the world’s already-producing fossil fuel fields, if fully developed, will overshoot the targets in the Paris Climate Agreement and push warming past 1.5 degrees Celsius. Avoiding such warming requires [ending](#) new investment in fossil fuel projects and [phasing out](#) production to keep as much as [40%](#) of already-developed fields in the ground.

Fossil fuel extraction on public lands accounts for [nearly a quarter](#) of all U.S. climate emissions. Moreover, studies show that reducing oil and gas production on federal lands and waters in the U.S. leads to a [global drop in emissions](#). President Biden cannot be a climate leader, nor can we meet our international climate commitments, until we begin managing our public lands and waters in a manner consistent with climate science. As we look forward to President Biden’s next two years in office, here are 9 concrete steps Interior can take to align with the President’s climate promises:

Phase out oil and gas production on public lands and waters to near zero by 2035

More than 360 climate, tribal, religious and conservation groups petitioned the Biden Administration to use its executive authority to phase out oil and gas production on public lands and oceans to near zero by 2035. The [petition](#) provides a framework to accomplish this through rulemaking, using long-dormant provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the National Emergencies Act.

Defend and Strengthen the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA is not only critical to ensuring that the federal government thoroughly analyzes the full range of environmental and socio-economic impacts from its actions, but it is also vital to protecting the rights of communities to weigh in on projects. We must protect and fully comply with this bedrock law right now more than ever. Recent proposals to limit NEPA in the name of “permitting reform” would undercut the government’s ability to address climate and other environmental impacts and would let fossil fuel companies steamroll communities. Instead of weakening NEPA, the Biden administration should ensure that its environmental reviews grapple with the climate impacts of fossil fuel proposals, and address whether they are consistent with the United States’ commitments to address climate change.

Establish guardrails on the leasing program to protect the climate, public lands, oceans and communities.

Every day our communities, environment, and climate are impacted by fossil fuel extraction and related activity. We should not be forced to wait for comprehensive reform before implementing common-sense protections. Climate, Indigenous and conservation groups sent a [letter](#) to President Biden in June 2021 outlining steps the Administration should take, including withdrawing sensitive areas from availability for fossil fuel leasing, and these measures are even more pressing after the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Issue a Five-Year Plan with No New Leases

Nearly 200 groups, including 48 from the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska, united in a [letter](#) demanding no new leases in the Interior Department’s Five Year Program (2023-2028) for offshore drilling. The administration’s initial proposal potentially offers 95+ million acres for offshore drilling, including 10 lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and one in Alaska’s Cook Inlet. This would exacerbate and prolong the ongoing, serious harm that large swaths of the country have been experiencing for generations, including ecological disasters like oil spills and harmful health impacts like asthma. However, the Biden administration can still choose not to offer new leases in the final Five Year Plan.

Stop authorizing new exploration, development, and drilling permits in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska until there is a proper analysis of climate damage

Over 300 environmental justice, climate, conservation, public health, Indigenous, faith-based, and community organizations sent a legal [petition](#) demanding that the Biden Administration immediately stop authorizing new exploration plans, development plans and drilling permits in the Gulf of Mexico until it properly examines the climate damage from more offshore drilling.

Stop issuing new permits to drill on public lands until there is a proper analysis of climate damage and a climate screen

Fossil fuel extraction on public lands accounts for nearly a quarter of climate emissions. The Bureau of Land Management must apply a climate screen when deciding whether to approve new permits to drill, informed by a robust analysis of climate impacts from fossil extraction on public lands.

Manage public lands for climate solutions

Indigenous, justice, and environmental groups [petitioned](#) the Administration to develop a regulatory framework to fully implement the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and manage public lands in-line with the climate crisis. The recommended framework would empower Interior to use its authority under FLPMA to manage public lands as part of our climate solutions and for the benefit of future generations.

Halt climate destroying projects in the Arctic

Located in the eastern portion of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (Reserve), the Willow development project is the largest oil extraction project proposed on federal lands, estimated to add more than 275 million metric tons of CO₂ to the atmosphere over the next 30 years. In order to protect the western Arctic and make good on its climate commitments, the Biden administration must reject the Willow Project. In addition, the Administration should rescind the Peregrine project, another potentially massive project in the western Arctic. If exploration leads to development, the project could cause 645 million metric tons of carbon dioxide to be released, further threatening the administration's climate promises. The Administration should also cancel the leases issued in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by the Trump administration in the unlawful 2021 lease sale. The only remaining lease-holder is an Alaska state-owned enterprise that obtained leases at the minimum price as a backstop, with banks and insurance companies and even oil companies abandoning the Arctic as a dead-end investment. Furthermore, the Administration has considerable discretion to limit the two sales under the Tax Act.

Protect climate and communities from near-term offshore lease sales

The Inflation Reduction Act directs the administration to offer three offshore lease sales, one in Alaska's Cook Inlet and two in the Gulf of Mexico, by December 2022 and September 2023, respectively. The administration had previously – and correctly – decided not to move ahead with these sales. While directing the sales to be held, the law leaves it to the administration to determine the details of each sale. It is imperative that Interior protect climate and communities from further harm by fully complying with its responsibility to evaluate the sales' environmental effects and using its broad authority to determine the size, scope, and conditions of the sales and any resulting leases.

The U.S. can be a climate leader, but not until we begin managing our public lands and waters in a manner consistent with climate science. Interior has the authority to act, and we urge you to move swiftly on the measures outlined above to protect our communities and future generations.

Sincerely,

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Brooklyn
350 Butte County
350 Central Mass
350 Chicago NFP
350 Colorado
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350 Contra Costa Action
350 Hawaii
350 Juneau
350 Kishwaukee
350 Mass
350 Merced
350 NJ-Rockland
350 PDX
350 Pensacola
350 Sacramento
350 Seattle
350 Triangle
350 Ventura County Climate Hub
350 Wichita
5 Gyres Institute
7 directions of service
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action
Action for the Climate Emergency (ACE)
AFGE Local 704
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alaska Wilderness League
Alliance 85
Animals Are Sentient Beings Inc
Animas Valley Institute
Anthropocene Alliance
Athens County's Future Action Network, acfan.org
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Ban SUP (Single Use Plastic)
Bay Area JEA
Be The Change - Colorado
Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group
Bergen County Green Party

Bergen County Immigration Strategy Group
Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists Social Justice Committee
Berks Gas Truth
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Better Path Coalition
Between the Waters
Black Warrior Riverkeeper
Bold Alliance
Boston Catholic Climate Movement
Break the Cycle Project
Bridging The Gap In Virginia
Bronx Jews for Climate Action
Buckeye Environmental Network
Businesses for a Livable Climate
Cahaba Riverkeeper
California Communities Against Toxics
California Environmental Voters
Call to Action Colorado
Canton Residents for a Sustainable, Equitable Future
Carrizo/Comecrudo Nation of Texas
CatholicNetwork US
CAVU (Climate Advocates Voces Unidas)
CDTech
Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry
Center for Biological Diversity
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ASTHMA COLLABORATIVE
Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War
Chaco Alliance
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Christians For The Mountains
Church Women United in New York State
Citizen's Alliance for a Sustainable Englewood
Citizens Caring for the Future
Citizens Coal Council
Citizens for a Healthy Community
Citizens' Climate Lobby Santa Cruz
Clean Energy Action
CleanAirNow_EJ
Climate 911
Climate Action Campaign of the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate Hawks Vote
climate movement co.
CLimate Reality - Portland
Climate Reality Project, Boca Raton Chapter

Climate Smart Missoula
CO Businesses for a Livable Climate
CO Dem Party - Energy and Environmental Initiative
Coalition Against Nukes
ColorBrightonGreen
Community for Sustainable Energy
Concerned Health Professionals of New York
Concerned Health Professionals of Pennsylvania
Conejo Climate Coalition
Creation Collaborative of the American Baptist Church: Rochester Genesee Region
Criminal Injustice Reform Network
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
DC Environmental Network
Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona University
Delaware Working Families Party
Democratic Socialists of America - Knoxville, TN
Divest NJ Coalition
Don't Waste Arizona
Dooda (NO) Desert Rock Organization
Dooda (NO) Helium Extraction Organization
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Day Initiative
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earthkeeper Health Resources
Earthworks
East Bay Community Solar Project
Eco-Eating
Ecological Health Network
Eight Rivers Council
EJ Action Hub
Elders Climate Action
Elders Climate Action - Massachusetts Chapter
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
Empower Our Future
Endangered Species Coalition
Equity Transit
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Extinction Rebellion US
Extinction Rebellion Youth United States
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
First Alliance Consulting LLC
First Church Unitarian, Littleton MA
First Wednesdays San Leandro
Food & Water Watch

Forgotten People
Frack Free New Mexico
Frack Off Chaco
Franciscan Action Network
FreshWater Accountability Project
Fridays for Future Orange County
Fridays for Future U.S.
Friends of Buckingham
Friends of the Earth
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication
Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA)
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
Greater New Orleans Climate Coalition
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Greece Baptist Church Sustainability Team
Green America
Green New Deal Virginia
Green Party of Nassau County
Green State Solutions
Greenbrier River Watershed Association
GreenFaith
GreenpeaceUSA
Hands Across the Sand
Harford County Climate Action
Healthy Gulf
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Heartwood
Hispanic Access Foundation
Honor the Earth
I-70 Citizens Advisory Group
Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition
Indigenous Environmental Network
Indivisible Ambassadors
Indivisible Colorado
Indivisible Highland Park (New Jersey)
Indivisible South Bay LA
Indivisible Ventura
Inspiration of Sedona
Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice
Interfaith EarthKeepers
Interfaith Power & Light
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Intheshadowofthewolf

Iowa CCI
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
Jewish Climate Action Network NYC
Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light
Kickapoo Peace Circle
Labor Network for Sustainability
Larimer Alliance for Health, Safety and Environment
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network, Inc. (LiKEN)
Locust Point Community Garden
Los Padres ForestWatch
Madhvi4EcoEthics
Malach Consulting
Maternal and Child Health Access
Mattawoman Watershed Society
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association Board
Media Alliance
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries
Metro N.Y. Catholic Climate Movement
Micah Six Eight Mission
Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition
Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
MN350
Montana Environmental Information Center
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement Association
Mothers Out Front
MoveOn.org Hoboken
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
Native Movement
Natural Capitalism Solutions
NC-APPPL (NC Alliance to Protect Our People and the Places We Live)
New Mexico Climate Justice
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
New York Progressive Action Network
Nicaragua Center for Community Action
No Fracked Gas in Mass
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)
North Country Earth Action
North Range Concerned Citizens
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Nuclear Energy Information Service (NEIS)
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NYPAN Enviro Committee
NYPAN Greene

NYPAN-SFL
Occupy Bergen County
Ocean Conservation Research
Oceanic Preservation Society
Oil and Gas Action Network
Olympic Climate Action
OneUpAction International
Our Revolution Hawaii
Our Revolution Ocean County
Our Wisconsin Revolution
Pass the Federal Green New Deal Coalition
Patagonia
Peace Action WI
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Preserve Giles County
Preserve Montgomery County VA
Progressive Democrats of America/Orange County Chapter
Project Amiga
Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights (POWHR)
PSARA (Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action)
PSR Arizona
Public Citizen
Rachel Carson Council
RapidShift Network
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Resist the Pipeline
Resource Renewal Institute
Revolving Door Project
Rio Arriba Concerned Citizens
Rise To Thrive
Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith
Rocky Mountain Wild
RootsAction.org
Salem Alliance for the Environment
San Bernardino Free Them All
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Santa Cruz for Bernie
Saphron Initiative
Save EPA (former employees)

Save Our Shores
SAVE THE FROGS!
Schools for Climate Action
Seneca Lake Guardian
Seventh Generation
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Small Business Alliance
SoCal 350 Climate Action
Social Eco Education (SEE)
Social Justice Committee of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock
Society of Alternative Resources
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc
South Seattle climate action network
South Shore Audubon Society
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southwest Native Cultures
Southwest Organization for Sustainability
Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic
Spirit of the Sun, Inc.
Stand.earth
Stone Crab Alliance
Sunflower Alliance
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Mill Valley
Sustainable PracticesLTD
Syracuse Cultural Workers
System Change Not Climate Change
Taproot Earth
Terra Advocati
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The CLEO Institute
The Climate Center
The Descendants Project
The Enviro Show
The Green House Connection Center
The Last Plastic Straw
The People's Justice Council
The Quantum Institute
Third Act Ohio
Third Act Virginia
Thomas Berry Forum at Iona University
TIAA-Divest! from climate destruction

Tidelines Institute
Together Colorado Climate Justice Committee
Transformative Wealth Management, LLC
tUrn Climate Crisis Awareness & Action
Turtle Haven Sanctuary
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of North Carolina
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Unite North Metro Denver
United For Clean Energy
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Upper West Side Recycling
USC Environmental Student Assembly
Virginia Community Rights Network
Volusia Climate Action
Vote Climate
Wall of Women
Waterkeeper Alliance
Waterspirit
Waterway Advocates
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable Climate
WildEarth Guardians
Williamsburg JCC Indivisible
Wilwerding Consulting, also Co-Chair, Littleton Business Alliance
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
Womxn from the Mountain
Working for Racial Equity
Youth Vs Apocalypse
Zero Hour