

January 11, 2023

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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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](http://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