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# Top oil lobbying group calls for carbon pricing

By [Zack Budryk](#) - 03/25/21 01:02 PM EDT [153](#)

The American Petroleum Institute (API) announced Thursday that it will support carbon pricing, a major shift for one of the nation's foremost energy lobbying groups.

API President and CEO Mike Sommers made the announcement in a press call Thursday, saying that the lobbying group was not endorsing a specific plan, but rather "what we're advocating here is a market-based approach and that could encompass many different ways to do this."

"It could encompass an economy-wide ... carbon tax or it could include a market price on emissions" like a cap-and-trade system, he added.

Sommers, asked about the Biden administration's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, said, "There's no way it is feasible without technologies that aren't currently in the marketplace today. We think that the best way to do that is through a market based carbon-pricing mechanism that isn't picking winners and losers."

Sommers also addressed [reports](#) that Democratic lawmakers are considering reversing Trump administration rules limiting methane regulation, saying the API "supports the direct regulation of methane for new and existing sources and we want to work with the Biden administration as they develop those new regulations."

In a separate announcement, the lobbying group said it was endorsing five specific actions, including accelerating technological development, further offsetting emissions caused by operations, driving climate reporting and advancing cleaner fuel sources.

"America has made significant progress in reducing emissions to generational lows, but there's more work to do, and there's nobody better equipped to drive further progress than the people who solve some of the world's toughest energy problems every day," Sommers said in a statement. "As our industry accelerates efforts to advance groundbreaking technologies, reduce emissions and drive transparent and consistent climate reporting, we urge lawmakers to support market-based policies that foster innovation, including carbon pricing."

The announcement comes weeks after the API's draft endorsement was [reported](#) by The Wall Street Journal, more than a decade after it was among the most vocal opponents of the Obama administration's cap-and-trade proposals.

Sen. [John Barrasso](#) (Wyo.), the top Republican on the Senate Energy Committee and a frequent critic of Biden administration energy policies, seemingly took aim at the proposal Thursday afternoon.

“Proposals that impose a cost on carbon will hurt American families,” Barrasso said in a statement that did not mention API by name. “This will lead to higher electricity bills and gas prices for American consumers. Spiking Americans’ energy costs while our economy recovers from a global pandemic is a disastrous idea.”

Meanwhile, the Center for Biological Diversity also criticized the proposal on environmental grounds, suggesting it would not make a meaningful difference.

“Nobody should fall for the oil industry’s new PR ploy, which will do nothing to fight the climate emergency. API is trying desperately to distract the Biden administration from the crucial work of keeping polluting fossil fuels in the ground,” Kassie Siegel, director of the Center’s Climate Law Institute, said in a statement Thursday. “Biden must not allow rich oil companies escape climate accountability with yet more self-serving greenwashing announcements, but instead should declare a climate emergency and permanently halt the leasing of public land for drilling and fracking.”