

April 4, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FY2024 Funding Request to End Fossil Fuel Leasing by the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chair Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of 215 organizations and our millions of members and supporters, we request that you zero out funding for all fossil fuel extraction on our public lands and offshore waters. After the release of the U.N. Emissions Gap Report 2022, U.N. Secretary-General Guterres pled to every nation on the planet that we must all “End our reliance on fossil fuels. Avoid a lock-in of new fossil fuel infrastructure. Invest massively in renewables.”¹ We are gravely concerned that Congress continues to lock-in more fossil fuel infrastructure every year, deepening this reliance on fossil fuels, and therefore we ask you to reverse course.

Despite the profound urgency of the climate crisis, year after year, and regardless of the which political party retains control of Congress, every year Congress continues to direct the Department of the Interior to authorize destructive fossil fuel extraction on our public lands and oceans. This zombie, status quo funding occurs despite how it continues to perpetuate lasting harm to tribal nations, frontline communities and other groups, all while it exacerbates impacts to the climate, our public lands and wildlife populations.

Zombie funding of the Department of the Interior’s fossil fuel programs have resulted in the Biden administration approving 6,430 permits for oil and gas drilling on public lands in its first two years.² While such activities greatly benefit the richest polluters in the history of the planet,

¹ World headed for climate catastrophe without urgent action: UN Secretary-General, United Nations Environment Programme (2022), <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/world-headed-climate-catastrophe-without-urgent-action-un-secretary-general>.

² Biden Administration Oil, Gas Drilling Approvals Outpace Trump’s, Massive Fossil Fuel Expansion Undermines U.S. Climate Commitments (2023), <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/biden-administration-oil-gas-drilling-approvals-outpace-trumps-2023-01-24/>.

the burning of fossil fuels results in unhealthy levels of air pollution, which increases many health risks including premature death, lung cancer, asthma attacks, stillbirths and developmental delays in children.

Therefore, we ask that Congress zero-out all funding in the FY2024 Interior appropriations bill that supports any oil, gas, and coal leasing, production, or extraction on public lands and offshore waters and instead support workers, a just transition to clean energy, and the restoration of our public lands.

Funds should be reallocated away from fossil fuel extraction and shifted towards renewable energy, restoration, and protection of wildlife habitat to address the millions of acres that have been degraded by fossil fuel extraction. This transition will ensure our lands and waters are preserved for current and future generations.

Specifically, we request the following for FY2024:

Bureau of Land Management – Oil and Gas Management

Eliminate funding for approvals of new oil and gas leases, and any approving applications for permits to drill on public lands and waters. Since FY2016, the appropriated amount for oil and gas management has increased nearly 90% from \$59.7 million³ to \$112.9 million in FY2023.⁴ This has resulted in larger and larger areas of public lands being locked away exclusively for oil and gas development.

Bureau of Land Management – Coal Management

Eliminate funding for new coal leases, expansions, and permits. Existing coal already authorized under federal leases is estimated to extend through 2041.⁵ Given the need to phase out coal as expeditiously as possible there is no rational justification to continue with any future funding for coal leasing or permitting under any scenario.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – Conventional Energy

Zero out funding for conventional oil and gas energy leasing, exploration, development, and production on offshore waters. Since FY2015, the appropriated amount for oil and gas management has increased nearly 25% from \$49.6 million⁶ to \$61.5 million in FY2023.⁷

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 – Suspend Section 50265

Congress should suspend during fiscal year 2024 the requirements found within Section 50265 of the Inflation Reduction Act, which requires the Department of the Interior to offer at least 2 million acres of public lands and 60 million acres of offshore waters for oil and gas leasing each year as a prerequisite to installing any new solar or wind energy.⁸ The deployment of renewable

³ 114th Cong. Rec., Vol. 161, No. 184—Book III at H10226 (Dec. 17, 2015).

⁴ 117th Cong. Rec., Vol 168, No. 198 at S8803 (Dec. 20, 2022).

⁵ Over-Leased: How Production Horizons of Already Leased Federal Fossil Fuels Outlast Global Carbon Budgets, EcoShift Consulting, prepared for the Center for Biological Diversity and Friends of the Earth at 1, (July 2016), https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/keep_it_in_the_ground/pdfs/Over-leased-Report-EcoShift.pdf.

⁶ 114th Cong. Rec., Vol. 161, No. 184—Book III at H10242 (Dec. 17, 2015).

⁷ 117th Cong. Rec., Vol 168, No. 198 at S8817 (Dec. 20, 2022).

⁸ Public Law 117–169, Title V, Subtitle B, Part 6, Sec. 50265, 136 Stat. 2061 (Aug. 16, 2022).

energy on public lands and waters should not be held hostage to ever-greater expansions of oil and gas development. Section 50265 undermines this nation's ability to address the climate crisis and only serves to enrich the fossil fuel industry.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – Renewable Energy

We recommend that Congress fund this line item at \$67.8 million, an increase of \$25 million from FY2023,⁹ which would increase the funding for renewable energy projects.

* * *

Congress must end business as usual funding of fossil fuel extraction on public lands and waters. If Congress fails to change course, it will simply be impossible to limit warming to below 1.5°C and ensure a livable planet for future generations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Bucks County
350 Butte County
350 Colorado
350 Eugene
350 Mass
350 Sacramento
350 Seattle
350 Triangle
350.org
350Hawaii
350PDX
5 Gyres Institute
Action for the Climate Emergency
Active San Gabriel Valley
AFGE Local 704
Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
American Friends Service Committee
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Animas Valley Institute
Athens County's Future Action Network
Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
Bay Area - System Change not Climate Change
Beyond Extreme Energy
Breast Cancer Action

⁹ 117th Cong. Rec., Vol 168, No. 198 at S8817 (Dec. 20, 2022).

Breathe Project
Bronx Climate Justice North
Bucks Environmental Action
California Communities Against Toxics
Center for Environmental Health
Church Women United in New York State
Citizens Action Coalition of IN
Citizens Alliance for a Sustainable Englewood
CleanEarth4Kids.org
Climate Action California
Climate Action Campaign of the Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate and Community Project
Climate Crisis Policy
Climate Equity Policy Center
Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Justice Alliance
Coalition to Protect New York
Colorado Jewish Climate Action
Common Ground Rising
Concerned Health Professionals of New York
Cooperative Energy Futures
Democratic Socialists of America - Knoxville, TN
Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition
Don't Waste Arizona
Earth Action, Inc.
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earth Guardians
Earthkeeper Health Resources
ecoAmerica
Eco-Eating
Eco-Justice Collaborative
Elders Climate Action
Elmirans & Friends Against Fracking
End Climate Silence
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Protection Information Center
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Extinction Rebellion Seattle
Farmworker Association of Florida
Feminists in Action Los Angeles
First Church Unitarian Littleton
Flight Free USA
Food & Water Watch
For the Many

FreshWater Accountability Project
Fridays for Future U.S.
Friends of the Earth
Gas Free Seneca
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Green State Solutions
GreenLatinos
Greenvest
HA:N United Methodist Church
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Heartwood
Heirs To Our Oceans
Hispanic Access Foundation
Honor the Earth
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.
In the Shadow of the Wolf
Indivisible 97415
Indivisible Colorado
Inland Ocean Coalition
inNative
Inspiration of Sedona
Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition
Lady Freethinker
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network
Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Los Padres ForestWatch
Love Wild Horses
Maine Climate Action Now
Malach Consulting
Marin Interfaith Climate Action
Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition
Mothers Out Front
Movement Rights
Movement Training Network
MoveOn.org Hoboken
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
Native Movement
NC WARN
Network for Oil and Gas Accountability and Protection
New Energy Economy
New Mexico Climate Justice
New York Progressive Action Network
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment
North Bronx Racial Justice

North Jersey Sierra Group
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Northern Arizona Climate Change Alliance
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NYPAN Greene
Oceanic Preservation Society
Oil and Gas Action Network
Oil Change International
Our Revolution Michigan
Our Revolution Ohio
Pass the Federal Green New Deal Coalition
Peace Action Wisconsin
Peace and freedom party, socialist, on the California ballot
Peacemakers of Schoharie County
Pelican Media
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light
People for a Healthy Environment
Peoples Climate Movement - NY
Physicians for Social Responsibility Arizona
Plant Native NW Bronx
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Port Arthur Community Action Network
Preserve Wild Santee
Prince George's County Peace & Justice Coalition
Protect All Children's Environment
Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights
Pueblo Action Alliance
Putnam Progressives
Quittapahilla Watershed Association
Rachel Carson Council
Responsible Alpha
Revolving Door Project
Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith Circle
Riverside Church
RootsAction.org
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
Santa Barbara County Action Network
Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Santa Cruz for Bernie
Santa Fe Forest Coalition
Save Our Shores
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sequoia ForestKeeper
Seventh Generation
Sheffield Saves

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Social Eco Education
Stand.earth
Stone Quarry House
Sunrise Movement Silicon Valley
Sustainable Medina County
Sustainable Mill Valley
Sustainable Silicon Valley
Sylvia Earle Alliance / Mission Blue
System Change Not Climate Change
Tapestry Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston
Terra Advocati
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Earth Bill Network
The Enchanted Biscuit
The Enviro Show
The Last Plastic Straw
The People's Justice Council
The Phoenix Group
The Quantum Institute
The River Project
The Wei LLC
Thrive at Life Working Solutions
Tongass Forest Women's Earth & Climate Action Network
Tucson Climate Action Network
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
Unitarian Universalist Society of South Suffolk
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unite North Metro Denver
United For Clean Energy
Upper West Side Recycling
Veterans for Climate Justice
Vote Climate
Wasatch Clean Air Coalition
Waterspirit
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
West Dryden Residents Against Pipeline
West End Revitalization Association
Wisconsin EcoLatinos
Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation
Womxn From The Mountain
Xun Biosphere Project
Young Democrats of America Environmental Caucus

Zero Hour
Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives at Williams College