

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Oppose Tommy Beaudreau for Deputy Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our organizations, and our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to oppose the nomination of Tommy Beaudreau for Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior and we urge you to vote no on his nomination. Tommy Beaudreau simply possesses too many conflicts of interests with the fossil fuel industry and a lackluster record within the Department of the Interior during the Obama administration to serve in such a critical role managing our nation's public lands and irreplaceable natural heritage, not to mention tackling the climate crisis that has been caused by the very industry that Mr. Beaudreau has represented for years.

Mr. Beaudreau's financial disclosure report reveals numerous, deeply-troubling conflicts of interests with the fossil fuel industry. After leaving the Obama Administration, Mr. Beaudreau entered private practice as a Partner in Latham & Watkins's environment, land, and resource department. During this time, he represented numerous coal mining, oil and gas, pipeline development, and mining companies including: Arch Resources, Total, Beacon Offshore Energy, Epic Midstream, Unocal Pipeline, and BHP.¹

Mr. Beaudreau also appears to have done work for two Saudi Arabian companies² — Red Sea Development³ and NEOM — the latter of which is connected to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.⁴ Reports indicate that the NEOM megacity project will result at least 20,000 members of the Huwaitat tribe being evicted from their tribal land.⁵ Mr. Beaudreau's many, deep

¹ Beaudreau, Tommy, Public Financial Disclosure Report (Mar. 17, 2021) <https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/C41A98393C66DBB4852586BF002EB529/%24FILE/Beaudreau,%20Tommy%20%20final278.pdf>.

² *Id.* at 6, 7.

³ His Royal Highness The Crown Prince Announces The Launch Of 'The Red Sea' Project As An International Tourist Destination As Part Of The Kingdom's 2030 Vision (Jul. 31, 2017) <https://www.pif.gov.sa/en/MediaCenter/NewsAttachments/The%20Red%20Sea%20-%20Press%20Release%20-%20English.pdf>.

⁴ HRH the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announces: NEOM – The Destination for the Future (Oct. 23, 2017) <https://www.pif.gov.sa/en/MediaCenter/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=31>.

⁵ Ruth Michaelson, 'It's being built on our blood': the true cost of Saudi Arabia's \$500bn megacity, *The Guardian* (May 4, 2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/04/its-being-built-on-our-blood-the-true-cost-of-saudi-arabia-5bn-mega-city-neom>.

connections to the fossil fuel industry stand in stark contrast to Secretary Haaland's disclosure report.⁶

Eleven years ago, the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster killed 11 oil workers and spewed more than 210 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for nearly three months, killing thousands of marine mammals, sea turtles, and birds. Mr. Beaudreau joined Interior shortly after the Deepwater Horizon disaster to help oversee the reform of offshore oil and gas, including the design and implementation of new regulations establishing standards for blowout preventers.⁷

Mr. Beaudreau failed to ensure that the strongest possible regulatory safeguards were implemented post-Deepwater Horizon. The rules failed to require the use of crucial safety technology such as blind shear rams on all blowout preventers by excluding them on existing floating drilling units and those currently under construction. The administration even admitted the new rules did not make the blowout preventers completely fail-safe, and it provided the industry up to seven years to comply with many of the requirements.

Mr. Beaudreau also failed to adequately address systemic problems that led to the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe. The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling identified systemic breakdowns in the environmental-review process for oil and gas activities as another major problem, as the Interior Department had excluded the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig from an in-depth environmental review. Although the Commission called for significant revisions, meaningful changes never occurred at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), which Mr. Beaudreau oversaw at the time. Instead, Mr. Beaudreau as the Director of BOEM, which is responsible for all offshore leasing and development at Interior, continued to rubber-stamp offshore drilling with no real review.

Tommy Beaudreau is too cozy with the industry that is most responsible for the escalating climate crisis, and would likely undermine the President's stated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030. His conflicts of interest and industry ties, which stand in stark contrast to Secretary Haaland, are incompatible with the Department, and his confirmation would greatly hinder the protections of our most cherished natural and cultural resources.

Sincerely,

1. Center for Biological Diversity
2. 2degrees Northampton Mass
3. 350.org
4. 350 Eugene
5. 350 Hawaii
6. 350 Kishwaukee (Illinois)

⁶ Haaland, Debra Anne, Public Financial Disclosure Report (Dec. 23, 2020) <https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/626D6068E15C3FFF8525865C00317974/%24FILE/Haaland,%20Debra%20Anne%20%20final278.pdf>.

⁷ Secretary Jewell Praises President Obama's Intent to Nominate Tommy Beaudreau as Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (Apr. 26, 2016) <https://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-praises-president-obamas-intent-to-nominate-tommy-beaudreau-as-assistant-secretary-for-policy-management-and-budget>.

7. 350 Pensacola
8. Anthropocene Alliance
9. Clean Energy Action
10. Climate Action Now Western Mass
11. Coalition Against Pipelines
12. Conejo Climate Coalition
13. Dogwood Alliance
14. Earth Action, Inc.
15. Elders Climate Action
16. Empower our Future
17. Food & Water Watch
18. FracTracker Alliance
19. Friends of the Earth
20. International Indigenous Youth Council, Los Angeles
21. Kickapoo Peace Circle
22. Milwaukee Riverkeeper
23. Publish What You Pay--United States
24. Rachel Carson Council
25. Revolving Door Project
26. Seeding Sovereignty
27. The Enviro Show
28. The Freedom BLOC
29. WildEarth Guardians
30. Zero Hour