

May 15, 2024

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 Tom Cole
Chairman
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: FY2025 Funding Request to End Fossil Fuel Approvals by the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of 234 organizations and our millions of members and supporters, we request that you zero out funding for all fossil fuel extraction on public lands and offshore waters. Following the release of the 2023 U.N. Synthesis Report, nations collectively agreed at COP28 on the need for “transitioning away from fossil fuels.”¹ Unfortunately, the annual funding bills passed by Congress undermine this newfound global consensus as the United States continues to lock in additional fossil fuel development on public lands and waters in its control. We are deeply concerned that Congress continues to advance the status quo for fossil fuel infrastructure every year, undermining efforts for a transition to renewable energy. We therefore request that the Congress cease funding fossil fuel development on public lands and waters in the FY2025 Interior appropriations bill.

Despite the urgency of the climate crisis, year after year, and regardless of the which political party retains control of Congress, Congress continues to direct the Department of the Interior to authorize fossil fuel extraction on our public lands and oceans. This zombie funding continues despite its harmful and lasting impacts to tribal nations, frontline communities and other groups, as well as its harm to public health, public lands, the climate, and wildlife populations.

Status-quo funding of the Department of the Interior’s fossil fuel programs have resulted in the Biden administration approving nearly 10,000 permits for oil and gas drilling on public lands in

¹ AR6 Synthesis Report, Climate Change 2023, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023), <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>. COP28 ends with call to ‘transition away’ from fossil fuels; UN’s Guterres says phaseout is inevitable, UN News (2023), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144742>.

its first three years,² keeping pace with the previous administration. This year the U.S. Energy Information Administration confirmed that the United States is now the largest oil producer in the world—and in history.³ While fossil fuel production financially benefits polluters, the impacts of fossil fuel production and emissions disproportionately harm Black, Brown, Indigenous, and poor communities in the United States.⁴

Therefore, we ask that Congress zero-out all funding in the FY2025 Interior appropriations bill that supports any oil, gas, and coal leasing, production, or extraction or the geological sequestration of associated emissions 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, ecological restoration, and protection of wildlife habitat to address the millions of acres that have been degraded by fossil fuel extraction. This transition will ensure public lands and waters are preserved for current and future generations.

Specifically, we request the following for FY2025:

Bureau of Land Management – Oil and Gas Management

Since FY2016, the appropriated amount for oil and gas management has increased nearly 90% from \$59.7 million to \$112.9 million in FY2023. Due to cuts across the board in FY2024 funding was slightly reduced to \$102.5 million for FY2024.⁵ This funding has resulted in additional areas of public lands being damaged, destroyed and otherwise off limits for all other use by the public. We therefore recommend ending funding for all new federal oil and gas approvals including but not limited to leasing, permits to drill, or renewals or extensions thereof. This request does not affect funding for monitoring and enforcement related to oil and gas production.

Bureau of Land Management – Coal Management

Likewise, we recommend eliminating funding for new coal leases, expansions, and permits. The lifespan of existing coal production already authorized under federal leases are estimated to extend through 2041.⁶ This funding has resulted in additional areas of public lands being polluted and then precluded from other use by the public. This request does not affect funding for monitoring and enforcement related to coal production.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – Conventional Energy

² Rampant Biden Administration Oil, Gas Drilling Approvals Continue to Undermine U.S. Climate Commitments (2024), <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/rampant-biden-administration-oil-gas-drilling-approvals-continue-to-undermine-us-climate-commitments-2024-01-29>.

³ United States produced more crude oil than any country, ever (2024), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=61545>.

⁴ Donaghy, et. al. “Fossil fuel racism in the United States: How phasing out coal, oil, and gas can protect communities.” *Elsevier*, vol. 100, June 2023,.

⁵ H.R.4366 – 118th Congress (2023-2024): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024.

⁶ *Over-Leased: How Production Horizons of Already Leased Federal Fossil Fuels Outlast Global Carbon Budgets*, https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/keep_it_in_the_ground/pdfs/Over-leased-Report-EcoShift.pdf.

Similarly, we recommend ceasing funding for conventional oil and gas energy leasing, exploration, development, and production on offshore waters. From FY2015 to FY2023, the appropriated amount for oil and gas management has increased nearly 25% from \$49.6 million to \$61.5 million.⁷ Funding was largely maintained at \$59 million for FY2024.⁸ This request does not affect funding for monitoring and enforcement related to oil and gas production.

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 – Suspend Section 50265

Congress should suspend during FY2025 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.⁹ The deployment of renewable energy on public lands and waters should not be held hostage to ever-greater expansion of oil and gas development. Section 50265 undermines our nation’s ability to address the climate crisis by further enriching and entrenching the fossil fuel industry.

Bureau of Land Management – Renewable Energy

We recommend that Congress fund this line item at \$80 million to better advance the planning and permitting of renewable energy projects in a way that is protective of intact public lands ecosystems and that facilitates the survival and recovery of federally listed species. Funding for FY2023 was \$40.1 million, and FY2024 funding decreased slightly to \$39.4 million.¹⁰ This funding is essential for onshore renewable energy projects; and it is unacceptable for oil and gas management (i.e., \$115.8 million requested for FY2025¹¹) to receive higher funding than renewable energy investments.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management – Renewable Energy

We recommend that Congress fund this line item at \$80 million, an increase of about \$38 million from FY2024.¹² This funding is essential for offshore renewable energy projects; and it is unacceptable for BOEM conventional energy projects (i.e., \$67.5 million requested for FY2025¹³) to receive higher funding than renewable energy investments.

* * *

⁷ 114th Cong. Rec., Vol. 161, No. 184 at H10242 (Dec. 17, 2015); 117th Cong. Rec., Vol 168, No. 198 at S8817 (Dec. 20, 2022).

⁸ H.R.4366 – 118th Congress (2023-2024): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024.

⁸ 117th Cong. Rec., Vol 168, No. 198 at S8817 (Dec. 20, 2022).

⁹ Public Law 117–169, Title V, Subtitle B, Part 6, Sec. 50265, 136 Stat. 2061 (Aug. 16, 2022).

¹⁰ H.R.4366 – 118th Congress (2023-2024): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. Joint explanatory statement, Division E – Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 at p. 180. (March 3, 2024). <https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20240304/FY24%20INT%20Conference%20JES%20scan%203.1.24.pdf>

¹¹ Budget Justification and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2025, The United States Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (2024) at p. III-3.

¹² H.R.4366 – 118th Congress (2023-2024): Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. Joint explanatory statement, Division E – Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 at p. 194. (March 3, 2024).

¹³ Budget Justification and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2025, The United States Department of Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (2024) at p. 17.

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
198 methods
350 Bay Area Action
350 Colorado
350 Eugene
350 Humboldt
350 Network Council
350 Seattle
350 Triangle
350 West Sound Climate Action
350Brooklyn
350Bucks County
350Hawaii
350Kishwaukee
7 Directions of Service
A Community Voice ACORN
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Animals Are Sentient Beings Inc
Animas Valley Institute
Anthropocene Alliance
Athens County's Future Action Network (ACFAN.org)
Bay Area-System Change not Climate Change (BA-SCnCC)
Be The Change - Colorado
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Better Brazoria: Clean Air & Water
Between the Waters
Big Reuse
Boston Catholic Climate Movement
Breast Cancer Action
Breathe Project
Bronx Climate Justice North (BCJN)
California Communities Against Toxics
Care About Climate
Central Bergen Circle of GreenFaith
Chatham Research Group
Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)

Christians For The Mountains
Church of the Covenant, Boston
Church Women United in New York State
Citizens Alliance for a Sustainable Englewood (CASE)
Citizens' Resistance at Fermi Two (CRAFT)
Clean Energy Action
Climate Action Campaign at the Humbolt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate and Community Project
Climate Clock
Climate Crisis Policy
Climate Generation
Climate Hawks Vote
Climate Reality Project
Climate Reality Project - Northern Colorado Chapter
Climate Reality Project Bay Area
Climate Reality Project San Francisco Political Action Team
Colorado Coalition for a Livable Climate (CCLC)
Community Health
Cooperative Energy Futures
CT Climate Crisis Mobilization (C3)
Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition
Don't Waste Arizona
Earth Ethics, Inc
East Valley Indivisibles
Eco-Eating
EcoEquity
Ecologistics, Inc.
EJ Committee, Metuchen-Edison Area Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Elders Climate Action (ECA) Northern California (NorCal) Chapter
Elders Climate Action (ECA) Southern California (SoCal) Chapter
Empower Our Future
End Climate Silence
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
Environmental Transformation Movement of Flint (ETM Flint)
Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
Extinction Rebellion US
Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Social Action Council
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio
Food & Water Watch

Fossil Free California (FFCA)
Frack Free Illinois
FracTracker Alliance
FreshWater Accountability Project (FAP)
Fridays For Future NYC
Friends of the Bitterroot
Friends of the Earth
Fuerza Mundial (Women of the Americas)
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication
Global Warming Education Network (GWEN)
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Great Plains Action Society
Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility
Green State Solutions
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace Hawaii
Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc USA (HCRFF)
HealthLink
Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah (HEAL Utah)
Heartwood
Highland Park Ecology and Environmental Group
Human Rights Working Group, First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco
Indivisible South Bay LA
Inspiration of Sedona
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
Interfaith EarthKeepers
International Carbon Cycle - iCC
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Jewish Climate Action Network, MA
Judson Memorial Church
Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary
Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition
Larimer Alliance for Health, Safety, and the Environment
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network (LiKEN)
Living Rivers and Colorado Riverkeeper
Locust Point Community Garden
Long Beach Gray Panthers
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Los Jardines Institute
Los Padres ForestWatch
Madhvi4EcoEthics
Marin Interfaith Climate Action (MICA)
Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Midwest Building Decarbonization Coalition
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Mission Blue
MN350
Mother Earth Sustainable Agriculture Association (MASAA)
National Religious Coalition on Creation Care
NC WARN
New Energy Economy
New Hampshire Youth Movement
New York Progressive Action Network
Nicaragua Center for Community Action
No Fracked Gas in Mass
North Country Earth Action
North Country Peace Group
North Shore Audubon Society
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
Occupy Bergen County (New Jersey)
Ocean Conservation Research
Oceanic Preservation Society (OPS)
Oil and Gas Action Network
Oil Change International
Oilfield Witness
Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
Our Revolution
Pacific Environment
Paradise Las Vegas Indivisible
Pass The Federal Green New Deal Coalition
Pax Christi New York State
Peace Action WI
Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW!
Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action (PICA)
Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light (PAIPL)
People's Action
Peoples Response Network (PRN)
Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania
PJALS
Port Arthur Community Action Network (PACAN)
Preserve Wild Santee
Progressive Democrats of America, Oregon Chapter
Project Outreach: The Frac Sand Sentinel
Protect All Children's Environment (PACE)
Protect PT (Promote PT/Protect PT)

Putnam Progressives
RATT Pack
Re:wild Your Campus
Rise to Thrive
Rise Up WV
Rogue Climate
RootsAction.org
Saginaw Community Alliance for the People (Saginaw CAP)
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
Sanctuary Farms
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Save Our Illinois Land (SOIL)
SAVE THE FROGS!
SEE (Social Eco Education)
Seeding Sovereignty
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sequoia ForestKeeper
Shareable
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Social Justice Ministry of Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Goleta
Society of Fearless Grandmothers-SB
Society of Native Nations
South Country Peace Group, Inc. (SCPG)
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
Stand.earth
Sunflower Alliance
Sunrise Movement
Sunrise Movement San Diego
Sustainable Arizona
Sustainable Mill Valley
Terra Advocati
Terra.do
The Climate Alliance of Santa Cruz County
The Climate Museum
The Connected Chef Foundation, Inc (Connected Chef)
The Earth Bill Network
The Quantum Institute
The Reformed Church of Highland Park
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative (TCCPI)
Tongass Forest Women's Earth & Climate Action Network

Trade Justice New York Metro
Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN)
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas
Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of North Carolina
Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Unite North Metro Denver
United Student Leaders (USL)
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
US CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK
UUSE
Valley Watch
Vegan Flag
Vessel Project of Louisiana
Vote Climate
Wall of Women
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Woke AF (Against Fascism)
Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN)
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)
Womxn From The Mountain
Youth United for Climate Crisis Action (YUCCA)
Zero Hour