From:	Schwartz, Melissa A
To:	Alonso, Shantha R; Anderson, Robert T; Kelly, Katherine P; Klein, Elizabeth A; Roberts, Lawrence S; Wallace, Andrew G; Taylor, Rachael S; Decker, Danielle K; Rezaeerod, Paniz; Gray, Morgan; Beaudreau, Tommy P
Cc:	Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Feldgus, Steven H; Cherry, Tyler A; Grandy, John W
Subject:	CLOSE HOLD: Oil and gas litigation update
Date:	Monday, August 16, 2021 3:38:35 PM
Attachments:	Draft Oil Gas Statement 8-16-21 115pm.docx

PRE-DECISIONAL

All –

Around 5pm today, the Department of Justice will file an appeal of the district court decision in *Louisiana v. Biden*. Once filed, we will issue a statement from Interior. The attached is the latest version, THOUGH NOT FINAL til it is sent. Laura is taking lead on notifications for groups, the Hill and Governors.

I am attaching the draft for your awareness (it is closed for internal edits). Please refer questions to Laura or Tommy, there is a lot of nuance here that we have to be mindful of. **OCL and OIEA**, please plan to distribute the press release once it hits your boxes, but not before. **Rachael**, I did not include your career staff but Niall will need to send appropriators after it's out.

Please flag any questions,
M

Interior Issues Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing Program

The Department of the Interior (Interior) confirmed today that the Department of Justice (DOJ) has appealed the preliminary injunction entered by the district court in *Louisiana v. Biden*, which enjoined Interior from implementing the pause in new federal oil and gas leasing as set forth in Section 208 of Executive Order 14008. DOJ is appealing that decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Federal onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing will continue as required by the district court while the government's appeal is pending.

The appeal of the preliminary injunction is important and necessary. Together, federal onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs are responsible for significant greenhouse gas emissions and growing climate and community impacts. Yet the current programs fail to adequately incorporate consideration of climate impacts into leasing decisions or reflect the social costs of greenhouse gas emissions including, for example, in royalty rates. Furthermore, past operation of the programs did not adequately reflect the breadth of the Interior Secretary's stewardship responsibilities, including conserving wildlife habitat, protecting historic and cultural resources, ensuring that public lands are available for multiple uses, protecting marine, coastal, and human environments, meeting trust responsibilities to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, and providing a fair return to taxpayers. Moreover, the federal oil and gas programs inadequately account for environmental harms to lands, waters, and other resources, foster speculation by oil and gas companies, and frequently leave impacted communities out of important conversations about how they want the public lands and waters managed.

These issues have been the subject of numerous critical reports over decades by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG), Congressional Committees, and other independent reviewers. For example, the federal oil and gas program has been on GAO's "High Risk List" for more than a decade, which notes programs and operations that are "vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement, or in need of transformation." GAO has issued frequent reports outlining serious concerns with the onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs. As far back as 1989, GAO noted that BLM "is not exercising balanced stewardship over the public lands." In just the last three years, GAO has highlighted deficiencies with noncompetitive leasing, royalty relief policies, data collection, ensuring a fair return, and bonding and reclamation practices in the onshore program, and about decommissioning liabilities, safety and environmental oversight, fiscal returns from the leasing program, and pipeline safety and decommissioning in the offshore program.

The OIG has regularly highlighted energy management in its annual reports of "Major Management and Performance Challenges facing the U.S. Department of the Interior," stating, "many of DOI's energy programs are vulnerable to waste, fraud, and mismanagement, which can jeopardize public safety and environmental integrity and increase the financial burden on the American public."

Interior will proceed with leasing consistent with the district court's injunction during the appeal. In complying with the district court's mandate, Interior will continue to exercise the authority and discretion provided under the law to conduct leasing in a manner that takes into account the program's many deficiencies. Separately, Interior continues to review the programs' noted shortcomings, including completing a report. The Department also will undertake a programmatic analysis to address what changes in the Department's programs may be necessary to meet the President's targets of cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Pursuant to resolution of another litigation matter involving leasing activity on the public lands, Interior will release a notice of intent to conduct a review of the federal coal leasing program later this week.

From:	Triebsch, George F
To:	White, Katherine M; Taylor, Rachael S; Myers, Casey A
Subject:	RE: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12
Date:	Friday, October 8, 2021 2:54:56 PM

Rachael,

Qualtrics is an intelligent cloud platform that helps organizations manage and improve experiences in core areas of service including customer, employee product and brand. The Qualtrics platform helps organizations listen, understand and take action on experience data. Qualtrics excels in capturing experience data at large scale across channels such as web, text, phone and chat. Qualtrics cloud services and data scientists help organizations know what to ask about, how to ask and where to ask to collect the right data at the right time.

Perhaps OCIO – Todd Dabolt could attend?

They did mention Diversity, Equity and Inclusion so perhaps Alecia? Or Maybe USGS or NPS participation?

George

George Triebsch
Chief of Staff

Office of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget
1849 C Street NW, Room 5116
Washington DC 20240
Office: 202-208-2495
Cell: 202 236-0995

From: White, Katherine M <katherine_white@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 8, 2021 2:23 PM
To: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Triebsch, George F <george_triebsch@ios.doi.gov>; Myers, Casey A <casey_myers@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Hi Rachael,

The Dep Sec's office received a request for an external meeting that he won't be able to accept. He's passing it on to see if you or someone in PMB would want to take it instead?

The meeting is with:

- Zig Serafin, CEO, Qualtrics
- Kevin Briggs, Vice President Federal, Qualtrics
- Matt Chong, Area Vice President – Federal, Qualtrics

- Dana J Thompson, Partner, Fulcrum Public Affairs

And the topic is:
Goal: Build a relationship to support the Dept with its new highly visible Executive Orders, policies, and newly formed Strategic Initiatives. We would also touch upon areas such as DEI / Social Equity; better empowering the Dept, and how to enhance the NPS experiences.
To get better acquainted with Qualtrics as a potential partner and to identify places where further, more in-depth dialogue might be warranted.
It may involve discussion of the Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion directives/policies.

The request form is attached here. Let us know what you think. Thanks!

-Katie

Katie White
Executive Assistant
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget
1849 C Street NW, Room 5113
Washington, DC 20240
Phone: 202-208-6411
Katherine_White@ios.doi.gov

From: Rees, Gareth C <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 8, 2021 1:32 PM
To: White, Katherine M <katherine_white@ios.doi.gov>; Myers, Casey A <casey_myers@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Hi,

We have declined this for the Dep Sec. Would Rachael or someone in PMB want to do this?

Thanks

Gareth C. Rees

Office to the Deputy Secretary

U.S. Department of the Interior

Tel: 202-227-9181

From: Dana Thompson <dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 9:43 AM

To: Rees, Gareth C <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Hello there Gareth,

Thank you again for all that you are doing to help evaluate the request of Zig Serafin. I thought I would check in to see if you have any insight into whether the Deputy Secretary might be able to meet virtually with him next week.

Best wishes to you,
Dana

From: "dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com" <dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com>
Date: Tuesday, October 5, 2021 at 9:17 AM
To: "Rees, Gareth C" <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Good morning Gareth,

I hope your week is proceeding in a smooth way.

I wanted to check with you to see if the Deputy Secretary could confirm a time to meet virtually with Zig of Qualtrics.

Thanks so much!

Dana

From: "dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com" <dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com>
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 1:20 PM
To: "Rees, Gareth C" <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Hello Gareth,

I've attached the completed form. If the Deputy Secretary can't do a Zoom in either of the windows suggested, we would very much appreciate your help to identify alternate times.

Thank you for your help.

Dana

From: "Rees, Gareth C" <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Date: Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 12:05 PM
To: "dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com" <dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Good afternoon Dana,

Thank you for your request to meet with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau. Please find attached a meeting request form. Once we receive your completed for, we will process your request and respond to you as soon as possible. At this time, all meetings are being conducted virtually. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me (fingers crossed we'll be in the office tomorrow).

Regards

Gareth C. Rees

Office to the Deputy Secretary

U.S. Department of the Interior

Tel: 202-227-9181

From: Dana Thompson <dana.thompson@fulcrum-dc.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 11:42 AM
To: Rees, Gareth C <Gareth_Rees@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Requesting a meeting with Deputy Secretary Beaudreau for Qualtrics CEO Zig Serafin on Tuesday, October 12

Good morning Gareth,

I hope you are well. I am prayerful that the Senate will pass the CR and then that the House will do the same so that our agency programs can maintain continuity.

I would like to follow up on the request that I had intimated to the Deputy Secretary on a separate channel.   (I had mentioned two companies, but the second company is reconfiguring its approach before making its request).

Zig Serafin, CEO of a company called Qualtrics will be in town on Tuesday, October 12th.   We have already begun to build an itinerary of meetings throughout the day with other agencies, but **would Deputy Secretary Beaudreau happen to be available either at 11:30 AM, 12:00 PM, or 2:00 PM**? Below, please find some contextual information for the request and on the nature of the proposed dialogue with the Deputy Secretary, followed by the bio of CEO Serafin (also attached).

Our goal for the meeting:

- This is a relationship-building meeting to support the Department of Interior with its new highly visible Executive Orders, Policies, and newly formed Strategic Initiatives.

How to frame the conversation:

- DEI and Social Equity:
  - Aligns to America the Beautiful Initiative
  - Organizations around the U.S. are taking action to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce. In addition, our government agencies cannot effectively solve our communities' concerns around equity and social justice without understanding and strengthening the social capital in our communities. Implement a program that empowers communities within the Interior like the tribal space and conduct equity impact analyses and measures service delivery with an equity lens so you can strengthen community engagement and trust while ensuring voice and action to drive lasting change.
- Empower and listen to the field:
  - Aligns to the Clean Energy Executive Order, specifically Section 216
  - DOI can modernize its research by empowering the field workers by securing and consolidating some of our nation's most critical research on a single platform that will listen to everyone. This includes scientists, researchers, park rangers, law enforcement, first responders, and seasonal workers.
- Enhance the National Park Experience

Aligns to America the Beautiful Initiative and the Great American Outdoors Act

- Collect and analyze data to prioritize maintenance across the Park Systems. By leveraging Public Comment and feedback from Park Employees, DOI can help identify and prioritize backlogs more efficiently and effectively.
- We can help visitors have a voice when modernizing the National Parks to improve services, preserving the lands while creating safe outdoor opportunities.

Specific Initiatives that could be important for the Deputy Secretary and DOI:

- Clean Energy Future: Executive Order
  - Interior is looking at the following steps around ***oil and natural gas development of public lands and offshore waters.*** With that, the Interior is pending completing a comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices. (Section 208)
  - As part of Section 216, DOI will be working with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishers, and other key stakeholders to ***achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.***
- America the Beautiful: identifies priority areas for the administration's early focus, investments, and collaboration:
  - ***Creating more parks and safe outdoor opportunities in nature-deprived communities***
  - ***Supporting Tribally led Conservation and restoration priorities***
  - ***Increasing access for outdoor recreation***

Zig Serafin's bio is attached, and by way of a background on Qualtrics, hopefully you will find the below factoids helpful:

Background on Qualtrics

- Qualtrics is a small company doing big things. Qualtrics is an intelligent cloud platform that helps organizations manage and improve experiences in core areas of service including customer, employee product and brand. The Qualtrics platform helps organizations listen, understand and take action on experience data. Qualtrics excels in capturing experience data at large scale across channels such as web, text, phone and chat. Qualtrics cloud services and data scientists help organizations know what to ask about, how to ask and where to ask to collect the right data at the right time.
- Footprint: 12,000 active customers; 3,300 employees; 25+ countries of presence
- $60B total addressable market
- Recently filed for IPO from SAP
- Securely collect more than 3 billion responses annually in support of customers
- 75% of the Fortune 500 rely on the Qualtrics
- 99 of top 100 business schools use Qualtrics
- In 2020, Forrester ranked Qualtrics #1 in 7 employee experience categories. Qualtrics is the only Leader who received a "Differentiated" rating in seven of Forrester's ten criteria.
- Qualtrics was named a Leader in Gartner's 2020 Magic Quadrant for the Voice of the

Customer. Qualtrics was the highest positioned vendor for Ability to Execute, and one of the highest placed vendors in Completeness of Vision.
- Securely collect more than 3 billion responses annually in support of customers

Background on Qualtrics in Public Sector

- They have 100+ federal customers, including every cabinet-level agency
- They have 450+ government customers across federal and state and local governments
- Qualtrics is authorized at the FedRAMP Moderate level (Government website)
- They announced plans for DoD Impact Level 4 in September (Blog link)
- Health and Human Services (HHS) is one of its larger customers

How Qualtrics has helped Federal agencies

- **The U.S. Air Force used Qualtrics to engage on racial injustice:** Qualtrics was used as part of an intra-service Air Force study to understand racial injustice or bias experiences.
- **GSA used Qualtrics to improve customer focus: Consolidated 27 separate customer engagement** surveys into a central customer satisfaction platform to collect feedback across the entire enterprise.
- **HHS closed the experience gap with Qualtrics:** Uses feedback from across all nine domains to triage website problems - everything from broken links to confusing content - to make strategic improvements. **More than 750,000 responses** acted on annually; **10% increase in users finding the information they need**.
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to improve the quality of health:** CMS uses Qualtrics to improve the quality, measures and outcomes in hospitals, nursing homes, and among clinician providers, with the overarching effect of saving lives. **Reports are viewed twice daily by the Administrator to understand the impact of COVID** and projects to improve the quality of response.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,
Dana

Dana J. Thompson
Partner & Co-Founder
Fulcrum Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 297-3688
Dana.Thompson@fulcrum-dc.com
T: @djthom01 | T: @Fulcrum_DC
IG: danajthom06 | IG: fulcrumpublicaffairs

From:	Lassiter, Tracie L
To:	O"Connor, Niall W
Cc:	Macdonald, Cara Lee; Hamilton, Edward A
Subject:	Re: PLEASE READ: Request from Interior Approps for Briefing on Oil and Gas Report
Date:	Tuesday, November 30, 2021 2:44:08 PM

Hi Niall,

got side tracked scheduling mayhem! Laura would have the following dates/times available per the dates and timeframes you have requested.

Wed, Dec 1- 1:00-1:30

Thur, Dec 2- 12:00-1:00 (no morning availability)

Thanks,

Tracie L. Lassiter
Executive Assistant
Land and Minerals Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, Room 6615
Washington, D.C. 20240
(Office) 202-208-2599
(Main) 202-208-6734
(Cell) 202-306-6900
Tracie_Lassiter@ios.doi.gov

From: O'Connor, Niall W <niall_oconnor@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 1:12 PM
To: Lassiter, Tracie L <Tracie_Lassiter@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Fw: PLEASE READ: Request from Interior Approps for Briefing on Oil and Gas Report

Hi Tracie,

Does Laura have time Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning to have this briefing with Approps Majority staff (House and Senate)? Drew Wallace from OCL will also be invited so I was hoping to have one or two times to offer him before confirming with Hill staff.

Thanks,
Niall

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 1:00 PM
To: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>; Moss, Adrianne <Adrianne_Moss@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Werwa, Eric <eric_werwa@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Flanagan, Denise A <Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov>; O'Connor, Niall W <niall_oconnor@ios.doi.gov>; TAYLOR, TIFFANY <Tiffany_Taylor@IOS.DOI.GOV>
Subject: Re: PLEASE READ: Request from Interior Approps for Briefing on Oil and Gas Report

Talked to Rachael; I can do this. Will appreciate the company of Adrianne and Drew if that works.

From: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 12:22 PM
To: Moss, Adrianne <Adrianne_Moss@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Werwa, Eric <eric_werwa@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Flanagan, Denise A <Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov>; O'Connor, Niall W <niall_oconnor@ios.doi.gov>; TAYLOR, TIFFANY <Tiffany_Taylor@IOS.DOI.GOV>
Subject: RE: PLEASE READ: Request from Interior Approps for Briefing on Oil and Gas Report

Defer to Laura on who best to lead/participate, her/Steve/others like Kate? OCL will join.

From: Moss, Adrianne <Adrianne_Moss@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 10:14 AM
To: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Werwa, Eric <eric_werwa@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Flanagan, Denise A <Denise_Flanagan@ios.doi.gov>; O'Connor, Niall W <niall_oconnor@ios.doi.gov>; TAYLOR, TIFFANY <Tiffany_Taylor@IOS.DOI.GOV>
Subject: PLEASE READ: Request from Interior Approps for Briefing on Oil and Gas Report

All,

We've had a request from the Majority staff on both the House and Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee for a briefing on the recently released Oil and Gas Leasing Report. This would be a briefing for only the Majority staff. They are looking to schedule something this week either Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. They can also find time next week if necessary.

In addition to alerting you to this request, I am seeking guidance as to who to coordinate with at DOI who would lead/attend this briefing. Our office is happy to set something up once we know who to include.

Thank you.

Adrianne Moss
Deputy Director, Office of Budget
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, Room 4106
Washington, DC 20240
Phone 202-208-3944 (Direct Line)
Phone 202-262-5809 (Cell)
Email: Adrianne_Moss@ios.doi.gov

From:	Sanchez, Alexandra L
To:	Barnett, Eve S; Heard, Preston S; Daniel-Davis, Laura E
Cc:	Cardinale, Richard; Taylor, Rachael S
Subject:	RE: 508 compliance - Q
Date:	Wednesday, November 24, 2021 3:09:35 PM

Those links work for me. Thank you, Eve!

From: Barnett, Eve S <Eve_Barnett@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 1:06 PM
To: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

I think I've identified the issue - Alex, I emailed you the links to confirm and can discuss as needed!

—
Eve S. Barnett
Presidential Management Fellow
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
202-255-8874
(she/her)

From: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 2:31:10 PM
To: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Barnett, Eve S <Eve_Barnett@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: 508 compliance - Q

Alex: It is all the DOI OIG links in Footnotes 18 and 19.

Eve: I can give you a call.

From: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 2:29 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>; Barnett, Eve S <Eve_Barnett@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Happy to help - let me know which links and I can attempt to figure them out!

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 12:22:34 PM
To: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>; Barnett, Eve S <Eve_Barnett@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Preston,
I've added Eve Barnett, who while not originally responsible has been helping out a lot with issues like this, and Alex Sanchez, who has been involved since the beginning. Eve and Alex - are you able to jump in? We can always come up with a different solution if we need to.

Thank you,
Laura

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 2:18 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E
Cc: Cardinale, Richard; Taylor, Rachael S
Subject: RE: 508 compliance - Q

Laura,

In attempting to make this report 508-compliant, we have come across "dead links" in the Endnotes section for all of the DOI OIG reports. When we place the DOI OIG URLs in a web browser, the web page states "Page not found." Can you identify the individual responsible for putting together this report? It would be very helpful to speak with them.

Preston

From: Heard, Preston S
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 12:11 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: 508 compliance - Q

Thank you, Laura.

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 11:58 AM

To: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Here you go! Thank you so much. Let me/us know if you have any questions.

From: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:50 AM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Thanks. Standing by...

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From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:49:35 AM
To: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Rich,
The report has a couple charts, but that's it for graphics. It's already cleared everyone, although I may get a few more nits in the next hour-ish to incorporate. Should be able to get it to you NLT noon today, and we'd plan to release/post likely mid-morning on Friday.
Laura

From: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:42 AM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Thanks, Laura. Does it contain graphics? Preston and I have spoken and we are poised and ready. Really appreciate getting it NTL Noon so that we can we get started promptly. Also, will it contain a transmittal letter from the Secretary and will we need to clear the report with Bob and other senior leaders?

Rich

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:30:57 AM
To: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>; Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

It is about 20 pages, including endnotes.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:05:43 AM
To: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: 508 compliance - Q

Good Morning. Happy to help if we have someone who is available. How long is the report?

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 7:47:44 AM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: 508 compliance - Q

Rich - Let me add my profuse thanks in advance for your help – and your team's help – with this late-breaking task.

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 7:46 AM
To: Cardinale, Richard <Richard_Cardinale@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: 508 compliance - Q

Rich - we are finally ready to release and post the oil and gas report, directed by EO 14008, on Friday. Would your team be able to assist with making it 508 compliant? I expect we will have the final version by mid-day today. Sorry to have this develop the day before Thanksgiving! And please let me know.

Thank you,
Laura

From:	Barnett, Eve S
To:	Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Heard, Preston S; Sanchez, Alexandra L
Cc:	Cardinale, Richard; Taylor, Rachael S
Subject:	Re: 508 compliance - Q
Date:	Wednesday, November 24, 2021 2:28:42 PM

Hi Preston,

I'm more than happy to help. You can give me a call at the number below if that helps?

All my best,
Eve

—
Eve S. Barnett
Presidential Management Fellow
Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
202-255-8874
(she/her)

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 2:22:34 PM
To: Heard, Preston S <preston_heard@ios.doi.gov>; Barnett, Eve S <Eve_Barnett@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
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Cc:	Barnett, Eve S; Sanchez, Alexandra L; Taylor, Rachael S
Subject:	Re: 508 compliance - Q
Date:	Thursday, November 25, 2021 9:13:24 AM

I can only second what Rich has said here. Thank you so very much Preston and exec sec team, and to Alex and Eve for helping with the links.

I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday! (And I look forward to getting coached from the beginning on 508 compliance for the next report!)

Best,
Laura

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Preston,
The words thank you to you and the team are inadequate to express my deep appreciation for all you did to help make this document compliant. You all went above and beyond and your leadership was instrumental in that effort. I will reach out to Anne Marie, Sheila and Deirdre as well. I hope you have a relaxing and enjoyable holiday.
Rich

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Attachments: DOI Oil and Gas Report 508 Final.pdf

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REPORT ON THE FEDERAL OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM

Prepared in Response to Executive Order 14008

U.S. Department of the Interior

November 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

This report responds to Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,* which directed the Department of the Interior (DOI) to conduct a review of Federal oil and gas leasing and permitting practices.[1] This report considers both onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs in light of the Secretary of the Interior's broad stewardship responsibilities over public lands and Federal offshore waters.

The review found a Federal oil and gas program that fails to provide a fair return to taxpayers, even before factoring in the resulting climate-related costs that must be borne by taxpayers; inadequately accounts for environmental harms to lands, waters, and other resources; fosters speculation by oil and gas companies to the detriment of competition and American consumers; extends leasing into low potential lands that may have competing higher value uses; and leaves communities out of important conversations about how they want their public lands and waters managed.

The fiscal components of the onshore Federal oil and gas program are particularly outdated, with royalty rates that have not been raised for 100 years. States with leading oil and gas production apply royalty rates on State lands that are significantly higher than those assessed on Federal lands. The Texas royalty rate, for example, can be double the Federal rate. Likewise, bonding levels have not been raised for 50 years. Federal minimum bids and rents have been the same for over 30 years. These antiquated approaches hurt not only the Federal taxpayer but also State budgets because States receive a significant share of Federal oil and gas revenues.

For decades, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and DOI's Office of Inspector General (OIG) have sounded the alarm bell on the Federal oil and gas program. The GAO, a non-partisan independent agency that works for Congress, has consistently called for Congress and the Executive Branch to reform oil and gas leasing on Federal lands. The OIG, which provides independent oversight of DOI, has regularly highlighted energy management in its annual reports on major management and performance challenges,[2] saying, "many of DOI's energy programs are vulnerable to waste, fraud, and mismanagement, which can jeopardize public safety and environmental integrity and increase the financial burden on the American public."[3]

To inform this report, DOI reviewed studies, some going back decades, of the Federal oil and gas program's deficiencies, including from GAO and OIG. The DOI also conducted formal Tribal consultations; held a forum with expert panelists; reviewed public feedback; and met with States, members of Congress, and representatives from the oil and gas industry, labor organizations, conservation organizations, Indigenous organizations, environmental justice organizations, and academics. Issues were identified across all steps of Federal oil and gas development, from land use planning to decommissioning.

This review and outreach reconfirmed well-documented and long reported deficiencies in the Federal oil and gas program that support this report's findings and recommendations related to fiscal terms and bonding. This report identifies a number of recommendations that begin to modernize Federal land management. The reforms serve three main programmatic goals:

- Providing a fair return to the American public and States from Federal management of public lands and waters, including for development of energy resources;
- Designing more responsible leasing and development processes that prioritize areas that are most suitable for development and ensure lessees and operators have the financial and technical capacity to comply with all applicable laws and regulations; and
- Creating a more transparent, inclusive, and just approach to leasing and permitting that provides meaningful opportunity for public engagement and Tribal consultation.

These recommendations represent an overdue reform agenda, which is urgent even as the Interior Department begins to take into account new stressors and new opportunities for our public lands and waters, including addressing biodiversity loss, tackling climate change, and deploying new technology ranging from harnessing offshore wind in public waters, to sequestering carbon on public lands. Accordingly, this report focuses primarily on necessary reforms to the fiscal terms, leasing process, and remediation requirements related to deficiencies with the Federal oil and gas program, which are well documented as detailed below.

As the Department considers how to best implement the recommendations contained in this report,[4] the Administration will continue to work closely with Congress, State, Tribal and local officials, industry, labor organizations, environmental justice communities, and stakeholders to ensure that proper consideration is given to creating jobs, harnessing American ingenuity, and building a brighter, more sustainable future.

Overview: The Federal Oil and Gas Program

Onshore

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oversees 245 million acres of Federal public lands, including lands that are managed for outdoor recreation; development of oil, gas, coal, and renewable energy resources; grazing and timber production; safeguarding treasured cultural heritage and sacred sites; and supporting wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions.

In 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) established particular land and resource management authorities for BLM, bringing to the forefront multiple-use, sustained yield, and environmental protection as the guiding principles for public land management.[5] The FLPMA directs BLM to manage some areas for conservation to consider the best use of public lands in a broader context than economic return, and to take action necessary to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands. One of the many uses that BLM oversees is the management of energy and mineral resource development on approximately 245 million acres of Federal onshore lands and 700 million acres of subsurface Federal minerals, which is guided by the Mineral Leasing Act.[6]

Federal onshore oil and gas production accounts for approximately seven percent of domestically produced oil and eight percent of domestically produced natural gas. The BLM currently manages 37,496 Federal oil and gas leases covering 26.6 million acres with nearly 96,100 wells.[7] Of the more than 26 million onshore acres under lease today to the oil and gas industry, nearly 13.9 million (or 53 percent) of those acres are non-producing.[8]

The oil and gas industry has a substantial number of unused permits to drill onshore. As of September 30, 2021, the oil and gas industry holds more than 9,600 approved permits that are available to drill. In fiscal year (FY) 2021, BLM approved more than 5,000 drilling permits, and more than 4,400 are still being processed.[9] Industry suggests that the significant surplus of leases and permits is necessary for a successful business model, but this speculative approach contributes to unbalanced land management. When land is under contract for potential oil and gas activity, the shared public lands cannot be managed for other purposes, such as conservation or recreation.

Offshore

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) work to ensure the development of energy and mineral resources on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) is done in a safe and environmentally and economically responsible way. The OCS is comprised of submerged lands generally starting three nautical miles offshore the United States[10]—totaling nearly 2.3 billion acres in the Pacific, Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and offshore Alaska and Hawaii. These offshore areas also have shared uses, such as supporting marine wildlife habitat, coastal tourism, subsistence uses, recreational and commercial fishing, and national defense activities.

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) explains that the OCS is a "vital natural resource reserve held by the Federal Government for the public,"[11] and establishes policies and procedures to develop and manage OCS oil and gas resources, achieve national economic and energy policy goals, enhance national security, and reduce dependence on foreign sources of energy.[12] In recognition of the significant impacts on coastal and non-coastal areas that exploration, development, and production of OCS resources can have, OCSLA requires that development be conducted in a safe manner and subject to environmental safeguards. Amendments made to OCSLA in 1978 established the policy that oil and natural gas resources on the OCS should be preserved, protected, and developed in a manner that is consistent with the need to meet the nation's energy needs; balance development with protection of the human, marine, and coastal environments; and ensure a fair and equitable return on resources through a competitive leasing process.

In FY 2020, the OCS produced approximately 642 million barrels of oil and 910 million cubic feet of gas, accounting for 16 percent of all oil production and 3 percent of natural gas production in the United States.[13] Most of this production is in the Gulf of Mexico, where the amount of acreage under lease has declined by more than two-thirds over the last 10 years.[14] This decline is mostly driven by market conditions and changes in companies' strategic approach to leasing. Of the more than 12 million acres under lease, about 45 percent is either producing oil and gas or is subject to approved exploration or development plans, which are preliminary steps leading to production. The 55 percent of the leased acreage that is non-producing may be in an earlier stage of the development process, or being held for speculative reasons, indicating a sufficient inventory of leased acreage to sustain development for years to come.

The Need for Reform

In recent decades, the nation's energy needs and the mix of resources available on domestic and global energy markets have materially changed, while the statutes and policies underpinning the nation's oil and gas program have remained largely static. Utility-scale renewable energy production has emerged as a viable source of energy that can be generated on public lands and in offshore waters. The direct and indirect impacts associated with oil and gas development on our nation's land, water, wildlife, and the health and security of communities—particularly communities of color, who bear a disproportionate burden of pollution—merit a fundamental rebalancing of the Federal oil and gas program.

The Federal oil and gas program has been identified on GAO's "High Risk List" for more than a decade, which notes programs and operations that are "vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement, or in need of transformation."[15] As far back as 1989, GAO noted that BLM "is not exercising balanced stewardship over the public lands."[16] In 1990, GAO observed that BLM would approve "some drilling permits without first completing the environmental studies."[17] This Administration has taken action to stop that practice. Indeed, GAO has issued frequent reports outlining serious concerns with the onshore oil and gas leasing program. In just the last three years, GAO has highlighted deficiencies with noncompetitive leasing (GAO-21-138), royalty relief policies (GAO-21-169T), data collection (GAO-21-209), ensuring a fair return (GAO-19-718T), and bonding and reclamation practices (GAO-19-615). Offshore, GAO has raised recent concerns about decommissioning liabilities (GAO-16-40), safety and environmental oversight (GAO-17-293), fiscal returns from the leasing program (GAO-19-531), and pipeline safety and decommissioning (GAO-21-293).

Internally, OIG has regularly highlighted energy management in its annual reports of "Major Management and Performance Challenges facing the U.S. Department of the Interior," stating, "many of DOI's energy programs are vulnerable to waste, fraud, and mismanagement, which can jeopardize public safety and environmental integrity and increase the financial burden on the American public."[18] In recent years, OIG has identified specific concerns with the collection, verification, and distribution of energy resource revenues; issues arising from aging onshore and offshore infrastructure; oversight and management of oil and gas production; and offshore environmental compliance and enforcement, among other issues.[19]

Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have also introduced various bills in recent years to reform and reimagine the Federal leasing programs. The bills include proposals to raise royalty rates to provide a fair return to taxpayers; address bonding deficiencies to ensure that companies properly restore public lands following extractive activities; support non-extractive uses of public lands and waters; restore community input in leasing decisions; and set emissions reductions strategies, among other reforms.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

What follows is a high-level blueprint to begin to modernize the onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs in order to better restore balance and transparency to public land and ocean management and deliver a fair and equitable return to American taxpayers.[20]

Providing a Fair Return to American Taxpayers and States

<u>Onshore</u>

Adjusting and modernizing the fiscal terms used in the Federal onshore oil and gas program increases returns to the public and disincentivizes speculators or less responsible actors. The GAO has reported extensively that taxpayers have not received a fair rate of return due to outdated fiscal terms.[21] For example, Federal onshore oil and gas royalty rates are consistently lower than on State-issued leases and Federal offshore leases (see Tables 1 and 2); in fact, onshore royalty rates have never been raised. Likewise, bonding levels have not been raised for 60 years, and minimum bids and rents have been the same for over 30 years. If a lease is not sold competitively at auction, for two years it can be sold non-competitively for a modest administrative fee, with no bonus bid required. These noncompetitive leases are frequently less diligently developed as competitively issued leases. From 2013 to 2019, average revenues from competitive leases were nearly three times greater than revenues from noncompetitive leases.[22]

Such low prices for leases, coupled with generous 10-year lease initial terms that are frequently extended, encourage speculators to purchase leases with the intent of waiting for increases in resource prices, adding assets to their balance sheets, or even reselling leases at a profit rather than attempting to produce oil or gas. In one particularly egregious recent case, an individual purchased nearly 300 oil and gas leases and resold many of them almost immediately for up to 13 times the original purchase price.[23] Speculators, not taxpayers, receive the profits from these resales. Because information on lease resales is not easily accessible, local communities are often in the dark when it comes to who has the right to develop oil and gas nearby.

The BLM should improve the return to taxpayers and create an oil and gas program that is more consistent with BLM's multiple-use and sustained yield mandates. Consideration should be given to raising royalty rates and, to the extent allowed by statute, to increasing the current minimum levels for bids, rents, royalties, and bonds. Congressional passage of pending bipartisan legislation could further modernize fiscal terms. States will also benefit from a modernized fiscal system since they receive 49 percent of all oil and gas revenues generated from public lands within their borders.[24] Onshore revenues also fund water reclamation projects throughout the West through contributions to the Reclamation Fund, and may also contribute to the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund.

Royalties

The Mineral Leasing Act was passed in 1920 and set royalties at a minimum of 12.5 percent for oil and gas produced from public lands. Today, 100 years later, leases are still being sold using these low rates, which are out of step with modern times. Numerous public reports provide support for raising royalty rates for leasing on public lands, and nearly all State and private lands require that operators pay a royalty rate higher than 12.5 percent.[25] In June 2017, GAO reported that studies showed that raising Federal royalty rates for onshore oil and gas could "decrease production on federal lands by a small amount or not at all but could increase overall federal revenue."[26]

Table 1: Oil and Gas Royalty Rates across Federal Public, Private, and State Lands[27]

Leasing Jurisdiction	Oil & Gas Royalty Rate
California	Negotiated lease-by-lease, but generally no less than 16.67 percent
Colorado	20 percent
Montana	16.67 percent
New Mexico	18.75-20 percent
North Dakota	16.67 or 18.75 percent depending on the county
Oklahoma	18.75 percent
Texas	20-25 percent
Utah	16.67 percent
Wyoming	16.67 percent
Private Lands	Generally, 12.5-25 percent
Federal Lands	12.5 percent, sometimes less

This table shows the oil and gas royalty rate based on jurisdiction.

Taxpayers for Common Sense released a report last year stating that the Federal Government "lost up to $12.4 billion in revenue from oil and gas drilling on federal lands from 2010 through 2019" because Federal royalty rates are too low.[28] Additionally, the same report found little evidence supporting claims that increasing the Federal onshore royalty rate would drive developers away and reduce overall revenues. This finding aligns with the results seen in Colorado and Texas, where there was no significant effect on production from State lands after State royalty rates were raised.[29]

The BLM should begin to adjust royalties for competitive leases offered in individual lease sales and initiate a rulemaking to establish a higher minimum royalty for onshore oil and gas leases. The BLM also should consider limiting discretionary royalty relief, which it has provided extensively to lessees in the recent past, while it updates its current royalty relief guidance and reassesses the economic assumptions used during royalty relief application evaluations.

Bonus Bids

A bonus bid is the price paid at a lease sale for an oil and gas lease. The minimum bonus bid is set at $2 per acre—an amount that has not been changed since 1987.[30] If an area offered for lease does not receive a bid during the lease sale, the bonus bid is waived, and the area can be acquired during the next two years by the first party that pays a nominal application fee.

The GAO found that leases purchased with a higher bonus bid of more than $100 per acre are over 20 times more likely to be developed in their first lease term than leases purchased with the minimum bid of $2 per acre.[31] The BLM should initiate rulemaking to increase the minimum bid to discourage speculators and to provide a better return to the taxpayer.

Rental Rates

Companies pay rent until the lease is in production, and then they pay royalties on the oil and gas produced. The rental rates, which have not changed since 1987, are $1.50 per acre per year for the first five years, then $2 per acre per year for the next five years, at which point a non-producing lease would expire. The lease is automatically extended as long as production continues.

A GAO report from 2009 concluded that:

> Interior does less to encourage development of federal oil and gas leases than some state and private landowners. Interior officials cited one lease provision that may encourage development—escalating rental rates. … Compared to Interior, the eight states we reviewed undertook more efforts to encourage development on their oil and gas leases, using increasing rental rates as well as shorter lease terms and escalating royalty rates. Some states also do more than Interior to structure leases to reflect the likelihood of oil and gas production, which may encourage faster development.[32]

The BLM should initiate a rulemaking in order to increase rental rates for future lease sales.

Bonding

Current regulations require financial assurance from all lessees to ensure compliance with lease terms and requirements, which is generally provided in the form of a lease surety bond. A lease surety bond remains in place until all lease obligations have been met, including decommissioning, which can extend beyond the expiration of the lease. A surety bond can be issued as a lease-specific bond, a statewide bond, or a nationwide bond, and additional bonds may be necessary to ensure compliance with lease obligations and regulations.

Insufficient bonding levels provide an inadequate incentive for companies to meet their reclamation obligations and increase the risk that taxpayers will be required to cover the cost of reclaiming wells in the event that the operator refuses to do so or declares bankruptcy. According to a 2019 GAO report:

> … weaknesses with bonds for coal mining and for oil and gas development pose a financial risk to the federal government as laws, regulations, or agency practices have not been adjusted to reflect current economic circumstances. We have also reported that BLM has no mechanism to pay for reclaiming well sites that operators have not reclaimed.[33]

The risks associated with low bonding rates have become more apparent in light of the recent increase in bankruptcies. Company liquidations often result in wells becoming orphaned, which then fall to the Federal Government or States to address, while some companies have used Chapter 11 restructuring to get out of reclamation obligations.[34]

According to the same 2019 GAO report, oil and gas lease bonds do not provide sufficient financial assurance because, among other things, most individual, statewide, and nationwide lease bonds are set at regulatory minimum values that have not been adjusted for inflation since the 1950s and 1960s.[35] These minimum bond amounts and the year calculated are: individual lease, $10,000—1960; statewide, $25,000—1951; nationwide, $150,000—1951.[36] The National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska bonds were set in 1981; an individual lease is $100,000, and a reserve-wide bond is $300,000.[37] While individual States have bonding levels that are often too low to fully reclaim modern horizontally-drilled wells, most States require significantly higher bonds than the Federal Government, often with bonding requirements that adjust based on the depth and number of wells covered.[38]

The BLM should increase minimum bond amounts and set the appropriate levels taking into consideration changes in technology, the complexity and depth of modern wells, inflation, and the risk of abandonment. While such regulations are being developed, BLM should adjust bonds for individual, high risk leases through adequacy reviews and when leases are reinstated or applications for permits to drill are extended.

<u>*Offshore*</u>

Royalties and Royalty Relief

The BOEM evaluates lease terms on a sale-by-sale basis to ensure they are consistent with current market or resource conditions. The OCSLA sets the minimum offshore royalty rate at 12.5 percent and directs that leasing be conducted in a way that ensures the government receives fair market value (FMV). OCSLA also directs that management of the OCS be conducted in a way that considers economic, social, and environmental values, and protects the human, marine, and coastal environments.

A 2019 GAO report that assessed BOEM's process to evaluate whether it was receiving FMV for offshore leases recommended that BOEM take steps to reform its methodology to ensure that it was capturing the full value of the lease tracts it was offering.[39] The BOEM is in the process of responding to several of GAO's recommendations concerning oil and gas valuation procedures.

Table 2: Offshore Oil and Gas Royalty Rates (BOEM)

Water Depth (meters)	**Royalty Rate Prior to 2007**[40]	**Royalty Rate 2007**	**Royalty Rate 2008-March 2017**	**Royalty Rate August 2017-2020 (Sale 256)**
0 to < 200m	16.67%	16.67%	18.75%	12.5%
200 to < 400m	16.67%	16.67%	18.75%	18.75%
400m+	12.5%	16.67%	18.75%	18.75%

This table shows the royalty rate based on water depth. Fiscal terms are evaluated and set on a sale-by-sale basis. Date ranges indicate the years in which sales were held using those terms.

Revenues from lease sales, royalties on production, and rental fees are distributed to the U.S. Treasury, several coastal States through OCSLA section 8(g) and the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, the Historic Preservation Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Legacy Restoration Fund.[41]

As with BLM, BOEM, and BSEE will be continuing to study the most appropriate method for revising royalty rates and other fiscal terms to monetarily account for the costs of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.

Also similar to BLM, BOEM and BSEE have the authority to provide discretionary royalty relief depending on economic circumstances, and those agencies likewise will be reevaluating existing royalty relief guidance and the economic assumptions used to evaluate royalty relief applications,[42] insofar as royalty relief can have the effect of subsidizing uneconomic production at taxpayers' expense. The BSEE recently determined, for example, that the April 2020 Special Case Royalty Relief guidance neither formalized application and evaluation procedures nor provided adequate training to implement them, and BSEE has discontinued this specific royalty relief option.

Financial Assurances

Financial assurance requirements for operators offshore are similar to those onshore: all lessees must provide a general lease surety bond, which covers all terms and conditions of a lease and remains in place until all lease obligations have been met, including decommissioning, which can extend beyond the expiration of the lease. A surety bond can be issued as a lease-specific bond or as an area-wide bond that guarantees obligations on all leases held by a lessee within a specified area. Additional bonds may be necessary to ensure compliance with lease obligations and regulations.

Table 3. Bonding Amounts for Offshore Oil and Gas Activity[43]

Lease Activity	Lease-Specific Bond Amount	Area-Wide Bond Amounts
No approved operational activity	$50,000	$300,000
Exploration Plan	$200,000	$1,000,000
Development Production Plan	$500,000	$3,000,000
Pipeline Right of Way (ROW)	N/A	$300,000

This table shows the amounts for lease-specific and area-wide bonds.

Lessees, owners of operating rights, and ROW holders are jointly and severally responsible for decommissioning obligations and are required to perform this duty in a timely manner, consistent with regulations and guidance.

Recent bankruptcies have in some cases resulted in companies being unable to cover their decommissioning liabilities, leading to orphaned wells and idle infrastructure. The BSEE estimates that the liability for currently orphaned infrastructure on the OCS is approximately $65 million, with the potential to increase if more companies go bankrupt and create additional orphaned infrastructure. The GAO recently found that there were approximately $2.3 billion in decommissioning liabilities on the OCS that were not covered by bonds, and roughly $33 billion in liabilities had bonds waived because the financial condition of the leaseholder was considered strong enough.[44] The current regulatory structure governing financial assurances does not have the appropriate checks to intervene in advance of bankruptcies to require additional financial assurances. Financial assurance coverage should be strengthened to protect the Federal Government and taxpayers and to ensure that companies are financially able to meet their lease and decommissioning obligations.

In 2020, BOEM and BSEE published a notice of proposed rulemaking to address this issue.[45] The agencies will carefully consider comments received on both the proposed rule and this review to inform their approach for improving financial assurance requirements to better manage the risks associated with industry activities on the OCS.

Fitness to Operate

Offshore leases are significantly more expensive to acquire than onshore leases, which, among other reasons, results in less of a role for speculators in the leasing process. However, companies with poor environmental, safety, or reclamation histories are still allowed to bid for leases or acquire them from other companies. The BOEM plans to develop a "Fitness to Operate" standard for companies seeking to be designated as oil and gas operators and evaluate how to apply such a standard to potential new lessees or current lessees seeking to gain additional properties.
The Fitness to Operate standard will establish criteria that companies would need to meet in order to operate on the U.S. OCS. Requiring companies to meet minimal fitness to operate standards will ensure companies can meet their safety, environmental, and financial responsibilities.

Designing More Responsible Processes

Onshore

Through the land use planning process, BLM determines what lands may be available for oil and gas leasing, what lease stipulations will be applied to protect other resources and values, and what "conditions of approval" may be necessary on permits to drill for additional protection. The land use planning process requires extensive collaboration with Tribal, State, and local governments and the public regarding how Federal lands will be used and minerals will be extracted at specific locations.

As an overarching policy, BLM should ensure that oil and gas is not prioritized over other land uses, consistent with BLM's mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. The BLM should carefully consider what lands make the most sense to lease in terms of expected yields of oil and gas, prospects of earning a fair return for U.S. taxpayers, and conflicts with other uses, such as outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. The BLM should always ensure it is considering the views of local communities, Tribes, businesses, State and local governments, and other stakeholders.

Low Potential Lands

Common practice in BLM land use planning has been to leave the majority of Federal lands open for leasing and allow industry to drive decisions on what areas will be nominated for oil and gas leasing. Since there is no cost to nominate parcels of land for leasing, there is little disincentive for companies to identify large amounts of acreage regardless of the resource potential of that land or how seriously the nominator is considering bidding for the nominated parcels. The burden and expense then fall on BLM to process those parcels, triggering the dedication of BLM staff resources to analyze marginal lands that companies may not be interested in bidding on and that may never be leased, much less developed. At the same time, sales of large amounts of low-potential land often ignite local community concerns (particularly since low-potential lands are more likely to be in areas that are not accustomed to local oil and gas development) and result in protests that are time-consuming and resource-intensive to adjudicate.

The BLM should evaluate operational adjustments to its leasing program that will avoid nomination or leasing of low potential lands and instead focus on areas that have moderate or high potential for oil and gas resources and which are in proximity to existing oil and gas infrastructure.

Bidding Requirements

The current leasing process does not thoroughly screen buyers, which creates the potential for widespread speculative leasing, unqualified buyers, and large numbers of leases that may be issued noncompetitively. Indeed, speculative leasing has been observed in the leasing program as far back as 1980, when GAO wrote, "We found much inactive land being held by individuals who were not affiliated with oil companies and were, therefore, presumably speculators."[46]

Unlike the offshore or coal leasing programs, the onshore oil and gas program does not pre-clear bidders based on their ability to responsibly and diligently pursue development. Combined with artificially low minimum bids and rental rates, the system is easily taken advantage of by speculators seeking to re-sell leases at higher prices later, and it allows bidders to shield the identity of companies purchasing leases, leaving communities in the dark as to who is seeking to develop oil and gas on nearby public lands.

The BLM should consider reforms that ensure that bidders—and any subsequent proposed leaseholders or operators—are publicly identified and financially and technically qualified to develop leases.

<u>Offshore</u>

For future National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Programs, BOEM should consider advancing alternatives to the practice of area-wide leasing, under which the entire planning area is offered with few exclusions for a lease sale. Area-wide leasing is not required under OCSLA; it was first implemented by Interior Secretary James Watt in 1982 and has since been applied during the majority of OCS lease sales. An early assessment of the practice by GAO in 1985 found that the first 10 area-wide lease sales resulted in an estimated loss of $7 billion to the Federal Government,[47] and a review of the process published in 2006 found that area-wide leasing significantly reduced the amount of competition and the value of bids for each lease tract.[48] Moving to a leasing model where smaller areas are offered according to a number of criteria—including environmental protection, subsistence use needs, resource potential and financial considerations—will help ensure that American taxpayers are receiving a fair return for offshore oil and gas resources.

Creating a More Inclusive and Just Approach to Managing Public Lands and Waters

The stewardship mission of DOI mandates processes for outreach and receipt of public input, including from communities that may be most affected by DOI activities. These processes have not always been adequate, fair, or equitable, which thus perpetuates environmental injustice. Practices such as allowing anonymous lease nominations and recent efforts to restrict or eliminate public notice and comment periods can leave local community voices—including, in particular, Tribal voices—out of leasing and permitting processes. The DOI should undertake meaningful Tribal consultations and solicit public input more generally regarding its leasing and permitting processes.

III. CONCLUSION

Modernization of the Federal oil and gas program has been delayed for decades to the detriment of the American public, their public lands and waters, the environment, wildlife, and more. In its current form, the program falls short of serving the public interest in a number of important respects. It provides insufficient opportunities for public input, shortchanges taxpayers and States, and tilts toward opening up low potential lands without adequately considering competing multiple-use opportunities.

This report lays out actions that the Administration is considering taking, consistent with legal authorities and the Executive Branch's broad discretion, to provide a fair return to taxpayers and to steward shared resources. It also encourages Congress to act on pending legislation to provide fundamental reforms to the onshore and offshore oil and gas programs.

The DOI will continue to seek out honest and pragmatic paths forward—in concert with communities; Federal, State, local, and Tribal leaders; businesses and labor; and other stakeholders—to bring a common purpose to the management of America's public lands and waters, and the value they hold.

IV. ENDNOTES

[1] Exec. Order No. 14,008, 86 Fed. Reg. 7,619 (Jan. 27, 2021).
[2] U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, "Inspector General's Statement Summarizing the Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of the Interior for Fiscal Year 2019," November 2019, available at https://www.doioig.gov/reports/other/inspector-generals-statement-summarizing-major-management-and-performance-0; U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, "Inspector General's Statement Summarizing the Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of the Interior for Fiscal Year 2018, November 2018, available at https://www.doioig.gov/reports/other/inspector-generals-statement-summarizing-major-management-and-performance-1; U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, "Inspector General's Statement Summarizing the Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of the Interior," November 2017, available at https://www.doioig.gov/reports/other/inspector-generals-statement-summarizing-major-management-and-performance-2; U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, "Inspector General's Statement Summarizing the Major Management and Performance Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of the Interior," November 2016, available at https://www.doioig.gov/reports/other/inspector-generals-statement-summarizing-major-management-and-performance-3.
[3] U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General, "Inspector General's Statement Summarizing the Major Management And Performance Challenges Facing The U.S. Department Of The Interior," November 2015, available at https://www.doioig.gov/reports/other/inspector-generals-statement-summarizing-major-management-and-performance-4.
[4] This report includes only suggestions as to future Departmental actions, which will be promulgated, if at all, in compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act and other applicable law. This report is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officer or employees, or any other person.
[5] 43 U.S.C. § 1701.
[6] 30 U.S.C. § 181.
[7] Bureau of Land Management, *Oil and Gas Statistics*, available at https://www.blm.gov/programs-energy-and-minerals-oil-and-gas-oil-and-gas-statistics.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Bureau of Land Management, *APD Status Report September 2021*, available at https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/operations-and-production/permitting/applications-permits-drill.
[10] The OCS begins nine nautical miles off the Gulf of Mexico coasts of Florida and Texas.
[11] 43 U.S.C. § 1332(3).
[12] 43 U.S.C. §§ 1331-1356.
[13] U.S. Department of the Interior, "Natural Resources Revenue Data," available at https://revenuedata.doi.gov/; U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Crude Oil Production," available at https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_crd_crpdn_adc_mbbl_a.htm; U.S. Energy

Information Administration, "Natural Gas Gross Withdrawals and Production," Marketed Production data series, available at https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_prod_sum_a_EPG0_VGM_mmcf_m.htm.
[14] Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, "Combined Leasing Report July 1, 2021" and "Combined Leasing Report As of February 3, 2011," available at https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/leasing/combined-leasing-status-report.
[15] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS: Opportunities Exist to Better Ensure a Fair Return on Federal Resources," (2019); High Risk List," U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, https://www.gao.gov/high-risk-list.
[16] U.S. General Accounting Office, Change in Approach Needed to Improve the Bureau of Land Management's Oversight of Public Lands 1 (1989).
[17] U.S. General Accounting Office, "FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT: Better Oil and Gas Information Needed to Support Land Use Decisions," June 1990, available at http://archive.gao.gov/d24t8/141709.pdf.
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[20] This report focuses on reforms to the oil and gas leasing program, but DOI will also be conducting similar analyses and reviews on the Federal coal program to identify reforms in that program as well, including exploring ways that the costs of climate change are appropriately reflected in coal leasing terms.
[21] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS: Opportunities Exist to Better Ensure a Fair Return on Federal Resources," September 2019, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-531.pdf.

[22] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OIL AND GAS: Onshore Competitive and Noncompetitive Lease Revenues," November 2020, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-138-highlights.pdf.
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[24] 30 U.S.C. § 191.
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[29] Taxpayers for Common Sense, "Royally Losing: Higher Royalties on State and Offshore Oil and Gas Production Reap Billions More than Drilling on Federal Lands," February 2020, available at https://www.taxpayer.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/TCS-Royally-Losing-2020.pdf; U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OIL, GAS, AND COAL ROYALTIES: Raising Federal Rates Could Decrease Production on Federal Lands but Increase Federal Revenue," June 2017, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-17-540.pdf.
[30] 30 U.S.C. § 226(b)(1)(B); 43 C.F.R. § 3120.1-2.
[31] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OIL AND GAS: Onshore Competitive and Non-Competitive Lease Revenues," November 2020, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-138.pdf.
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[34] N. Sadasivam, "How bankruptcy lets oil and gas companies evade cleanup rules," *Grist*, June 2021, available at https://grist.org/accountability/oil-gas-bankruptcy-fieldwood-energy-petroshare/.
[35] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "FEDERAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT: Challenges to Ensuring a Fair Return for Federal Energy Resources," September 2019, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-718t.pdf.

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[38] Western Organization of Resource Councils, "BLM Oil and Gas Bonding Rules Leave Lands a Mess and Taxpayers Responsible," April 2020, available at http://www.worc.org/publication/8671/.
[39] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS: Opportunities Exist to Better Ensure a Fair Return on Federal Resources," September 2019, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-531.pdf.
[40] Predominant royalty rates, particularly in the decades immediately preceding 2006. But not all lease sales, particularly older ones, had these exact royalty rates.
[41] U.S. Department of the Interior, "Natural Resources Revenue Data," available at https://revenuedata.doi.gov/.
[42] Congressional Research Service, "Offshore Royalty Relief: Status During the COVID-19 Pandemic," May 2020, available at https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11380.
[43] 30 C.F.R. §§ 556.900, 556.901.
[44] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Offshore Oil and Gas Resources: Actions Needed to Better Protect Against Billions of Dollars in Federal Exposure to Decommissioning Liabilities," December 2015, available at https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-16-40.
[45] 85 Fed. Reg. 65,904 (Oct. 16, 2020).
[46] U.S. General Accounting Office, "Impact of Making The Onshore Oil And Gas Leasing System More Competitive," March 1980, available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/emd-80-60.pdf.
[47] U.S. General Accounting Office, Early Assessment of Interior's Area-Wide Program for Leasing Offshore Lands (1985).
[48] J. Boué and others, "A Question of Rigs, of Rules, or of Rigging the Rules?: Upstream Profits and Taxes in US Gulf Offshore Oil and Gas, *Oxford University Press,* 2006.

From: Schwartz, Melissa A
To: Sanchez, Alexandra L; Cherry, Tyler A; Daniel-Davis, Laura E
Subject: RE: report/review - public comments
Date: Saturday, December 4, 2021 3:12:56 PM

Sounds good – pls flag for us when it's up. Thanks!

From: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 3, 2021 3:21 PM
To: Cherry, Tyler A <tyler_cherry@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: report/review - public comments

We were planning on posting here:
Oil, Gas, Mineral and Energy Issues | U.S. Department of the Interior (doi.gov)

From: Cherry, Tyler A <tyler_cherry@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 3, 2021 3:15 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: report/review - public comments

Where will they be posted? And Melissa, worth considering a quick reporter note to our core folks?

Tyler Cherry
Press Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
(c) 202-549-2988

Follow us at @USInteriorPress and sign up here for updates from Interior.

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 3, 2021 3:10 PM
To: Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>; Cherry, Tyler A <tyler_cherry@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: report/review - public comments

Melissa and Tyler,
Alex has been working closely with the FOIA office to get the comments we received on the o&g review posted publicly. The initial tranche - most of them - will post this afternoon (Sanchez please update if that has changed). They constitute input from governmental officials, groups, and many form letters. About 3k are left to go - individual comments - where Alex is working with the FOIA team to scrub personal info.

Laura

From:	Stork, Allison J
To:	Sanchez, Alexandra L
Subject:	Re: Comment Breakdowns
Date:	Wednesday, December 1, 2021 8:51:42 PM

I forwarded several emails (including the last dashboard) that might be helpful to you. Please let me know if there is anything else you need.

Allison Stork
Deputy Chief, National Program Development Branch
Leasing Policy & Management Division
Office of Strategic Resources
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166
Office: (703) 787-1795
Mobile: (571) 265-2994
Email: Allison.Stork@boem.gov

From: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 5:53 PM
To: Stork, Allison J <Allison.Stork@boem.gov>
Subject: Re: Comment Breakdowns

Thanks, Allison! One ask is that I can get my hands on the most final dashboard and report from them. I'm finding the dashboard you identified as the final one in the share point is different from a version I had been sent in May. Thanks so much for all the assistance!

From: Stork, Allison J <Allison.Stork@boem.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:30:46 PM
To: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: Comment Breakdowns

Hello Alex,

Update on the contractor front--we would need to issue a new call order (contract) to obtain their help with this task. As I mentioned during our call yesterday, the approximate timeline for completion would be sometime in January. Since that doesn't sound like it would satisfy the urgent timeline, I think your best option would be to handle it in-house as you discussed yesterday.

Please let me know if you have any further questions about the comment analysis process or the documents on the SharePoint site.

Thanks,
Allison

Allison Stork
Deputy Chief, National Program Development Branch
Leasing Policy & Management Division
Office of Strategic Resources
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
45600 Woodland Road
Sterling, VA 20166
Office: (703) 787-1795
Mobile: (571) 265-2994
Email: Allison.Stork@boem.gov

From: Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 29, 2021 3:22 PM
To: Stork, Allison J <Allison.Stork@boem.gov>
Subject: Comment Breakdowns

Hi Allison,
As discussed, here is the breakdown of the comments/emails and their associated attachments that we are interested in. A PDF of the sets identified below would work fine for our purposes.

Set 1:
- State governors and State agencies (5)
- County commissioners (3)
- Non-energy industry and associations (9)
- Energy exploration and production companies and associations (37)
- Tribes and Tribal organizations (16)
- Federal agencies (2)
- Public interest groups and non-profit organizations (80)
- Unions (5)
- Universities and research institutes (8)

Set 2:
- Form letters received – one copy of each form letter and the number received

Set 3:
- Unique submissions from Individuals, non-affiliated

Let me know if you have any questions or need clarification. Thanks again for your attention to this request.
Alex

Alexandra Sanchez (she/her)
Special Assistant
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Land and Minerals Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

From: Rezaeerod, Paniz
To: Wallace, Andrew G; Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Feldgus, Steven H; Kelly, Katherine P; Sanchez, Alexandra L
Cc: Kasper, Rebecca I; Gray, Morgan
Subject: RE: O&G report briefings/convos
Date: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:51:43 PM

Got it. I spoke to HNRC majority and they suggested it be extended to both personal offices as well as Committee staff. I agree with that.

Unless folks disagree, I have the following times blocked off:
PRE-BRIEF with Feldgus and OCL: Monday, Dec. 6 from 10 to 10:30 AM
BRIEFING: Wednesday, Dec. 8 from 1 to 1:45 PM

Once I receive the green light from Drew I will email the HNRC majority and minority staff extending the offer to brief the Committee and personal office staff of HNRC on the oil and gas report next Wednesday, Dec. 6 from 1 to 1:45 PM.

Thanks,

Paniz Rezaeerod
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov

From: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Kelly, Katherine P <Kate_Kelly@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Kasper, Rebecca I <rebecca_kasper@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan <Leslie_Morgan_Gray@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: O&G report briefings/convos

Minus RT and TPB for the logistics

Virtual, not in person

SENR we'll do member offices

I think maybe we should do all offices too on the HNR side but Paniz you and I can talk – maybe you can take the temperature of the committee staff on both sides and if they prefer committee staff only then we can look at that route

From: Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:00 PM
To: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Kelly, Katherine P <Kate_Kelly@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Beaudreau, Tommy P <tommy_beaudreau@ios.doi.gov>; Kasper, Rebecca I <rebecca_kasper@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan <Leslie_Morgan_Gray@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: O&G report briefings/convos

Sounds good. Two other questions that I know Committee staff will ask:

1. In-person or virtual?
2. Committee staff or personal offices too?

Paniz Rezaeerod
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov

From: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 3:55 PM
To: Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Kelly, Katherine P <Kate_Kelly@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Beaudreau, Tommy P <tommy_beaudreau@ios.doi.gov>; Kasper, Rebecca I <rebecca_kasper@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan <Leslie_Morgan_Gray@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: O&G report briefings/convos

Yes – doesn't have to be this week but if not then early next week.

From: Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 3:52 PM
To: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>; Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Kelly, Katherine P <Kate_Kelly@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Beaudreau, Tommy P <tommy_beaudreau@ios.doi.gov>; Kasper, Rebecca I <rebecca_kasper@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan

<Leslie_Morgan_Gray@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: RE: O&G report briefings/convos

Will do. Are we looking at doing these before Christmas?

Paniz Rezaeerod
Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs - House
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

From: Wallace, Andrew G <andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 3:49 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Kelly, Katherine P <Kate_Kelly@ios.doi.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Taylor, Rachael S <rachael_taylor@ios.doi.gov>; Beaudreau, Tommy P <tommy_beaudreau@ios.doi.gov>; Kasper, Rebecca I <rebecca_kasper@ios.doi.gov>; Rezaeerod, Paniz <paniz_rezaeerod@ios.doi.gov>; Gray, Morgan <Leslie_Morgan_Gray@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: O&G report briefings/convos

Update on this front -

We told the SENR/HNR folks we'd do bipartisan briefings after the report came out. We're not getting urgent incoming on that but should go ahead and plan to do so. Let's do Steve for the HNR staff briefing and Laura for SENR. Paniz and Morgan can you work to find times that work and then take it to HNR/SENR respectively?

Majority approps interior subcoms for both House and Senate have asked for briefing – that is happening tomorrow with Laura. No request from the minority but if they make one we'll need to accommodate.

In addition, Sen. Whitehouse's staff reached out today: "We have some significant concerns and would like to discuss" so we'll need to do a staff convo there too – to avoid whack-a-mole we might want to consider do so under the auspices of the Senate climate working group where they could invite others. Steve going to look for your help on that one also.

Andrew G. Wallace
Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov

From:	Lefton, Amanda B
To:	Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Feldgus, Steven H; Knodel, Marissa S; Sanchez, Alexandra L; Diera, Alexx A; Culver, Nada L; Jackson, Danna R
Subject:	RE: Did anyone see this before today?
Date:	Wednesday, July 7, 2021 2:28:27 PM

+ danna BLM email

From: Lefton, Amanda B
Sent: Wednesday, July 7, 2021 2:27 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>; Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Culver, Nada L <nculver@blm.gov>; Jackson, Danna R <danna_jackson@ios.doi.gov>; Knodel, Marissa S <Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>; Diera, Alexx A <adiera@blm.gov>
Subject: RE: Did anyone see this before today?

No! Thank you so much for sending this around!

From: Daniel-Davis, Laura E <laura_daniel-davis@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 7, 2021 1:46 PM
To: Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>; Lefton, Amanda B <Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov>; Culver, Nada L <nculver@blm.gov>; Jackson, Danna R <danna_jackson@ios.doi.gov>; Knodel, Marissa S <Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov>; Sanchez, Alexandra L <alexandra_sanchez@ios.doi.gov>; Diera, Alexx A <adiera@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: Did anyone see this before today?

Have not seen.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Feldgus, Steven H <steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 7, 2021 1:37 PM
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Lefton, Amanda B; Culver, Nada L; Jackson, Danna R; Knodel, Marissa S; Sanchez, Alexandra L; Diera, Alexx A
Subject: Did anyone see this before today?

INTERIOR

GAO suggests Haaland strengthen oversight of offshore oil

Heather Richards, E&E News reporter
Published: Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Oil and gas drilling on public lands in Utah. Ellen M. Gilmer/File/E&E News

Congress' nonpartisan watchdog says the Interior Department needs to make changes in its oversight of offshore oil development.

The Government Accountability Office sent Interior Secretary Deb Haaland a **list** of recommendations, both new and long-standing, for her agency last week, rooted in its prior investigations and reports.

GAO identified the enduring risks of the federal oil and gas program as an area of chief concern, including what it described as the agency's inadequate regulations to safely manage offshore oil pipelines.

The recommendations dovetail with the White House's own interest in oil and gas activities on federal lands and offshore. President Biden has called on Interior to produce a set of recommendations for reforming the federal oil and gas program. Interior promised to release an interim update on that review this summer, which is expected to be made public any day.

GAO has identified the federal oil and gas program as one of the government's high-risk areas since 2011, citing its vulnerability to fraud, mismanagement and other abuses.

Frank Rusco, who leads GAO's natural resources and energy team, said Interior could be removed from that high-risk list by making "systemic changes" in its approach.

"The first thing will be to reestablish a leadership commitment to address the weaknesses we have found," he said.

In a series of reports over the years, GAO has flagged specific issues for agency action, such as orphan well management and evaluations of fair market value for offshore oil and gas leasing.

This spring, the office found that the federal government has allowed 18,000 miles of oil and gas pipelines to be abandoned in the Gulf of Mexico since the 1960s (***Greenwire***, April 19).

GAO recommended a new proposed rule for pipeline regulations to address the "long-standing limitations" for regulators to "ensure the integrity of active pipelines and the safety and environmental risks associated with their decommissioning." The Interior Department agreed with this suggestion.

In its letter to Haaland, GAO noted that Interior historically has an 81% record for implementing GAO recommendations. The agency has implemented half of the top priorities GAO recommended last spring, such as the creation of a process for reviewing high-risk wells offshore. And last year, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, a subagency of Interior, was removed from high-risk status for improving communications between the field and headquarters in D.C., as well as addressing several other issues flagged by the GAO, Rusco said.

But there are 13 high-priority recommendations GAO is flagging for Haaland's "personal attention."

These include the pipeline regulation update, as well as a call for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to enlist a third-party examiner to ensure that its appraisal of offshore oil and gas values isn't driven down to meet industry assessments.

GAO took issue with BOEM's valuation procedures in 2019, saying it could be missing out on billions of dollars for federal coffers. BOEM defended itself but conceded that it would review its practices (***Greenwire***, Oct. 24, 2019).

The GAO letter to Haaland also recommends that Interior improve its management of energy development on tribal lands and, more broadly, that it reduce barriers to Native American tribes carrying out federal programs.

____

Steve Feldgus, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
Steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov
He/him/his

From:	Feldgus, Steven H
To:	Sanchez, Alexandra L
Subject:	E&E Article
Date:	Friday, June 18, 2021 1:45:22 PM
Attachments:	2021.06.17 - E&E - Sources Interior fossil fuel report now at White House.pdf

____

Steve Feldgus, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
Steve_feldgus@ios.doi.gov
He/him/his

LATE-BREAKING NEWS

OIL AND GAS

Sources: Interior fossil fuel report now at White House

Heather Richards and Emma Dumain, E&E News reporters • Published: Thursday, June 17, 2021

An oil and gas rig overlooking Wyoming's Wind River Range. Larry Zuckerman/Bureau of Land Management Wyoming

The Interior Department has submitted to the White House its interim recommendations about the future of the federal oil and gas program, according to three sources familiar with he move.

President Biden in January ordered he energy and lands management agency, helmed by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, to review the oil program in light of its climate costs, including a consideration of increasing royalty rates paid by oil companies to develop public minerals.

That full assessment could take a long time, experts say, but Interior had promised to release the interim findings this summer.

It is not clear how long the White House intends to review the report before making it public. Neither the White House nor Interior immediately responded to a request for comment.

Because he oil review is simply a directive from the president, it is progressing along a more informal process of vetting and considera ion than proposed rules and regulations, for example, which obey a strict format for input and timing, sources said.

Earlier this week, Haaland told lawmakers on he Senate Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee that the report would be released "sometime in the near future."

The contents of the report have been tightly guarded by Interior and White House officials. Several sources on Capitol Hill familiar with Interior matters said they had no insight into what the report contained.

Reforms that have been spoken of favorably by members of the Biden administration include increasing royalty rates and addressing low bonding rates paid by industry in the federal oil and gas patch, leaving the risk of abandoned energy infrastructure. But conserva ionists are hoping for widespread changes, a possibility that has industry and its political champions on edge.

Biden's decisions on how to revamp the federal oil program could be a critical win for his climate ambi ions. Federal oil and gas development represents a relatively small footprint of the larger carbon releases from drilling — and from the downstream uses of fossil fuels, like gasoline. But it is one sector of the United States' prodigious oil and gas production where a president has significant authority.

Biden's oil review has been taking place in tandem wi h a freeze on federal oil and gas leasing. That moratorium has kicked up a bitter response from Republicans from oil states like Wyoming.

But a federal judge earlier this week barred Biden officials from continuing the oil and gas moratorium, siding with the attorneys general of 13 states and leaving ques ions as to where or when new leasing may occur.

ClearView Energy Partners LLC opined that the judge's ruling "exemplifies a headwind" to the Biden administra ion ambitions to increase regula ions on federal energy production. But he research group also said the win for opponents of the leasing ban may not last.

"Not only do we expect Interior to appeal he ruling, but we also think he Biden Administration might look to pause leasing via other mechanisms," the group stated in an update.

For many conservation groups, the setback streng hened their resolve to use a playbook sharpened during he Trump administration's "energy dominance" era by challenging oil decisions in court, even if that meant suing a White House hat had been friendly to heir push for oil reform.

What they are more concerned with is how he White House chooses to act following its review of the federal oil program, and how far it may go in reining in drilling of fossil fuels. The interim report may shed light on Interior's advice on the matter, if not the president's final decisions.

"This is poli icly scary to them," said Jeremy Nichols, of WildEarth Guardians, who added that groups would fight the administration if it fell short of real reform. "It is confronting the oil and gas industry — one of the most powerful lobbying organizations in his country."

Twitter: **@hroxaner** | Email: **hrichards@eenews.net**

From:	Daniel-Davis, Laura E
To:	Simon, Benjamin M; Crowley, Christian; Steele, Jonathan; Lee, Patrick; Miller, Ann W
Cc:	Sanchez, Alexandra L; Taylor, Rachael S
Subject:	THANK YOU!
Date:	Wednesday, June 9, 2021 12:03:52 PM

Huge, huge thanks to PMB Team Policy for the quick and excellent work analyzing revenue impacts from potential onshore leasing approaches. I know there is more to go to fully complete the look-in but wanted to express appreciation for the initial conclusions, which are really helpful as we continue our work on the interim report.

From: Schwartz, Melissa A
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Oil and gas report
Date: Sunday, November 28, 2021 10:55:52 AM

We had said we would release. How do you want to handle?

Melissa Schwartz (she/her)
Communications Director
Office of the Secretary
Department of the Interior

From: Heather Richards <hrichards@eenews.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 28, 2021 9:27:26 AM
To: Interior Press <interior_press@ios.doi.gov>; Cherry, Tyler A <tyler_cherry@ios.doi.gov>; Schwartz, Melissa A <melissa_schwartz@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oil and gas report

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Hey,

Is there a place I can review the public comments that Interior took in the preparation of the oil and gas report released Friday?

Thank you,

Heather

From:	Schwartz, Melissa A
To:	Rocco, Giovanni P; Daniel-Davis, Laura E; Decker, Danielle K; Gray, Morgan; O"Connor, Niall W; Rezaeerod, Paniz; Alonso, Shantha R; Cherry, Tyler A; Wallace, Andrew G; Anderson, Robert T; Gosar, Mili N; Greenberger, Sarah D; Kelly, Katherine P; Klein, Elizabeth A; Taylor, Rachael S; Beaudreau, Tommy P
Subject:	FYI: Interior Department Report Finds Significant Shortcomings in Oil and Gas Leasing Programs
Date:	Friday, November 26, 2021 8:21:12 AM

Good morning – this release will be distributed at 11:30am today. Drew is lead on authorizer calls. Apologies for the timing.

Interior Department Report Finds Significant Shortcomings in Oil and Gas Leasing Programs

Review Identifies Reforms to Ensure Fair Return to Taxpayers

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Interior today released its report on federal oil and gas leasing and permitting practices, following a review of onshore and offshore oil and gas programs. The report identifies significant reforms that should be made to ensure the programs provide a fair return to taxpayers, discourage speculation, hold operators responsible for remediation, and more fully include communities and Tribal, state, and local governments in decision-making.

"Our nation faces a profound climate crisis that is impacting every American. The Interior Department has an obligation to responsibly manage our public lands and waters – providing a fair return to the taxpayer and mitigating worsening climate impacts, while staying steadfast in the pursuit of environmental justice," said **Secretary Deb Haaland.** "This review outlines significant deficiencies in the federal oil and gas programs, and identifies important and urgent fiscal and programmatic reforms that will benefit the American people."

The report completes the review of the federal oil and gas programs called for in Executive Order 14008 and focuses primarily on necessary reforms to the fiscal terms, leasing process, and remediation requirements related to the federal oil and gas programs.

The Interior Department is committed to modernizing its oversight of oil and gas leasing and development to help address the climate and biodiversity crises and to advance environmental justice. The Biden-Harris administration is actively developing a National Climate Strategy for how the nation will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net zero to address the climate emergency.

In order to restore balance to the programs, the Department's report makes a number of specific recommendations, including adjusting royalty and bonding rates, prioritizing leasing in areas with known resource potential, and avoiding leasing that conflicts with recreation, wildlife habitat, conservation, and historical and cultural resources, all of which are consistent with pending congressional proposals.

The Department will continue to conduct appropriate outreach to stakeholders including state and local governments, Tribes, conservation and environmental justice communities, and industry and labor.

The Department conducted an extensive review of oil and gas development on public lands and waters following Executive Order 14008, including hosting a virtual public forum. The report reflects input received by the Department through robust engagement with state and local officials, members of Congress, and Tribes, as well as from a wide range of interests including the oil and gas industry, conservation groups, labor unions, Indigenous organizations, and the general public. The review also comes after years of the Government Accountability Office, the Department's Office of Inspector General, and several congressional committees and members of Congress highlighting the need for meaningful modernization of the programs.

###

From: U.S. Department of the Interior
To: Daniel-Davis, Laura E
Subject: Interior Department Report Finds Significant Shortcomings in Oil and Gas Leasing Programs
Date: Friday, November 26, 2021 10:30:49 AM

Having trouble viewing this email? View it as a Web page.

US Department of the Interior News Release

Date: Friday, November 26, 2021
Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

Interior Department Report Finds Significant Shortcomings in Oil and Gas Leasing Programs

Review Identifies Reforms to Ensure Fair Return to Taxpayers

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The Department conducted an extensive review of oil and gas development on public lands and waters following Executive Order 14008, including hosting a virtual public forum. The report reflects input received by the Department through robust engagement with state and local officials, members of Congress, and Tribes, as well as from a wide range of interests including the oil and gas industry, conservation groups, labor unions, Indigenous organizations, and the general public. The review also comes after years of the Government Accountability Office, the Department's Office of Inspector General, and several congressional committees and members of Congress highlighting the need for meaningful modernization of the programs.

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About the U.S. Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior (DOI) conserves and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provides scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honors the Nation’s trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper.

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Cc: Cherry, Tyler A; Rocco, Giovanni P
Subject: Oil and Gas Report Clips so far
Date: Friday, November 26, 2021 3:00:44 PM

AP: Biden sets out oil, gas leasing reform, stops short of ban

The Biden administration on Friday recommended an overhaul of the nation's oil and gas leasing program to focus on areas that are most suitable for energy development and raise costs for energy companies to drill on public lands and water. The long-awaited report by the Interior Department stops short of recommending an end to oil and gas leasing on public lands, as many environmental groups have urged. But officials said the report would move toward a more responsible leasing process that provides a better to return to U.S. taxpayers for oil and gas drilling on the nation's vast public lands and waters.

Reuters: Biden administration proposes higher fees in changes to federal oil, gas drilling

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration proposed a slew of changes on Friday to the federal oil and gas leasing program including hiking royalty rates drillers must pay on their production and limiting areas that can be developed in order to protect wildlife and cultural zones. The recommendations in the report, which followed a months-long review and which some environmental groups called too weak, say the leasing program should do more to benefit the public interest.

NYT: Interior Dept. Report on Drilling Is Mostly Silent on Climate Change

The Interior Department on Friday recommended that the federal government raise the fees that oil and gas companies pay to drill on public lands — the first increase in those rent and royalty rates since 1920. The long-awaited report recommended an overhaul of the rents and royalty fees charged for drilling both on land and offshore, noting one estimate that the government lost up to $12.4 billion in revenue from drilling on federal lands from 2010 through 2019 because royalty rates have been frozen for a century.

Washington Post: Oil and gas companies should pay more to drill on public lands and waters, Interior Department says

In an effort to curb carbon emissions and boost revenue, the Biden administration on Friday laid out plans to make fossil fuel companies pay more to drill on federal lands and waters. The 18-page Interior Department report describes a decades-old federal oil and gas leasing program that "fails to provide a fair return to taxpayers, even before factoring in the resulting climate-related costs."

WSJ: Interior Department Report Says Federal Oil-Leasing Program Needs Reform

Interior Department officials recommended that the Biden administration consider raising royalty rates for oil-and-gas leasing on federal lands, as President Biden seeks to deliver on promises to address climate change amid high inflation. In a report released on Friday, Interior officials urged Mr. Biden to raise royalty rates for competitive leases, saying that the program "shortchanges taxpayers" and that such rates haven't been increased for 100 years. It also said the department should avoid leasing in areas where that activity could conflict with wildlife and cultural resources.

CBS News: Biden administration says oil and gas companies should pay more to drill on public

lands

The Biden administration is recommending that oil and gas companies pay more money to drill on public lands and waters, but is stopping short of banning drilling on public lands. The Interior Department made its recommendation in a report released Friday, after finishing its review of federal oil and gas programs. Many environmental activists were hoping for more restrictions on drilling, or an outright ban. The review was prompted by an executive order.

NBC News: Biden administration seeks to raise the price to drill for oil and gas on public lands

The Biden administration called Friday for oil and gas companies to pay more to drill for oil and gas on public lands, arguing taxpayers are being short-changed by low rates that have stayed stagnant for more than a century. In a long-awaited report, the Interior Department said the federal leasing program must be overhauled to deliver better returns for the public and avoid damage to the environment and wildlife. Still, the administration stopped short of urging a permanent end to leasing government land to drill for fossil fuels, despite pleas from climate change advocates.

The Hill: Interior recommends imposing higher costs for public lands drilling

A long-awaited report from the Interior Department recommends taking steps to increase fees for drilling on public lands, arguing that taxpayers are currently being shortchanged. The department says that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) should carry out several policies that increase these rates. Drilling on public lands represents 7 percent of domestically produced oil and 8 percent of domestically produced natural gas. But, it does not make similar concrete recommendations for offshore drilling, which accounts for 16 percent of all oil production and 3 percent of natural gas production in the U.S.

Bloomberg Law: U.S. Interior Blueprint Calls for Boosting Oil Royalty Rates

The Biden administration on Friday issued a long-awaited blueprint for overhauling oil and gas development on federal lands that includes boosting royalty rates despite high gasoline prices that have spurred demands to accelerate domestic production. The Interior Department report recommends higher fees and more limits on federal oil and gas leasing to better account for climate change and ensure a higher return to taxpayers. The analysis represents the the culmination of a comprehensive review that President Joe Biden ordered in January.

CNN: Interior Department releases long-awaited review of federal oil and gas leasing program

The Department of Interior on Friday released a long-awaited report on oil and gas drilling on federal land that recommends an increase in leasing fees and consideration of climate change in leasing decisions. But the report largely sidesteps climate concerns, and does not recommend a halt to new oil and gas leasing -- a promise President Joe Biden campaigned on.

Fox Business: Biden Interior Department calls to raise prices for oil and gas companies to drill on public lands

The Department of the Interior released a report Friday that proposed "modernizing" the federal oil and gas program, in part by charging fossil fuel companies more money to drill on public lands and waters. The department's review found that the fiscal components of the current onshore federal oil and gas program are "particularly outdated, with royalty rates that have not been raised for 100 years," referring to the 12.5% rate the federal government charges fossil fuel companies for oil and gas extracted from public lands and public offshore waters.

Politico: Biden Interior calls for hiking royalty fees on oil companies in overhaul to leasing program

The Interior Department called on Friday for hiking the fees that companies pay for oil and gas produced on federal lands, part of the Biden administration's long-awaited review of the process that determines how the country leases out public land for energy production.

E&E News: Biden admin urges higher prices for drilling on public land

With little fanfare, the Biden administration today released a much anticipated report on how to reform the country's oil and gas program that suggests higher royalties and more restrictions on where the oil industry can drill on public land.

Axios: Department of Interior proposes raising cost of drilling on public lands

Oil and gas companies should pay more to drill on federal lands and waters, the Department of the Interior argued in a report released Friday, saying that the current rates were "outdated."