

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 12, 2022

Mr. Mike Sommers  
President and Chief Operating Officer  
American Petroleum Institute  
200 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Sommers:

We write to request information and documents related to the American Petroleum Institute (API)'s work on behalf of fossil fuel industry clients on the subject of climate change.

The Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) has jurisdiction over management of federal fossil fuel resources with the potential to drive climate change, and conservation of lands, waters, and species harmed by climate change.<sup>1</sup> Public perception of climate science influences implementation of current federal policy and informs development of potential legislation within the Committee's authority.

For decades, fossil fuel companies and associations have engaged in public relations campaigns to downplay the threat of climate change and the central role fossil fuels have played in causing it.<sup>2</sup> These influence campaigns were intended to prevent the country from taking critical steps to address the climate crisis.<sup>3</sup> Fossil fuel companies and trade groups have partnered with PR firms to use a variety of questionable tactics to undermine legislative and regulatory environmental initiatives.<sup>4</sup> For example, as a senior ExxonMobil lobbyist (since fired) explicitly admitted, industry will gladly work with "shadow groups" to secretly undermine climate efforts, and will rely on trade associations to be the "whipping boys" at oversight

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<sup>1</sup> House Rule X(1)(m).

<sup>2</sup> Cook, J., Supran, G., Lewandowsky, S., Oreskes, N., & Maibach, E., (2019). *America Misled: How the fossil fuel industry deliberately misled Americans about climate change*. George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. <https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/america-misled/>

<sup>3</sup> Schwartz, B. & Pramuk, J. (2021, September 29). *Exxon Mobil has been lobbying against parts of Democrats' big social and climate spending bill*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/29/exxon-mobil-has-been-lobbying-against-parts-of-biden-reconciliation-bill.html>

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Podmore, Z. (2021, May 30). *Industry groups pushed lawmakers to oppose Biden's oil lease pause despite state report showing limited impact*. The Salt Lake Tribune. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2021/05/30/industry-groups-pushed/>

<sup>4</sup> Brulle, R. & Werthman, C. (2021), "The role of public relations firms in climate change politics." *Springer Nature*, DOI: [10.1007/s10584-021-03244-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-021-03244-4)

hearings so that corporate executives can avoid having to answer tough questions.<sup>5</sup>

The Committee seeks greater understanding of this cooperation among industry, trade associations, and PR firms to influence public opinion and policymaking in ways that prevent the United States from addressing the climate crisis.

The Committee requests the following information and documents from January 1, 2013, to the present:

1. All documents and communications concerning public relations, marketing, and/or influence campaigns conducted on behalf of, or in the interest of members of the natural gas, coal, and/or oil sector(s).
  - a. Item 1 includes documents and communications to, from, and/or between entities with which API has contracted or partnered to advise, support, provide research/analytics for, or conduct any aforementioned campaign.
  - b. Item 1 also includes any opposition research and any communications to address news stories, journalists, filmmakers, and/or other individuals or public messages seen as adverse to the interests of members of the natural gas, coal, and/or oil sector(s).
2. Documents sufficient to show the dollar amounts of expenditures or projected costs for the activities described in Item 1, for each quarter from January 1, 2013, to the present.
  - a. Item 2 includes separate listings of payments to the entities identified in Item 1.a.

Please produce materials responsive to the above items, per the attached instructions, no later than **June 27, 2022**.

Contact the staff of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee at (202) 225-6065 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair  
Committee on Natural Resources



Katie Porter  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Committee on Natural Resources

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<sup>5</sup> Carter, L. (2021, June 30). *Inside Exxon's playbook: How America's biggest oil company continues to oppose action on climate change*. Unearthed. <https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2021/06/30/exxon-climate-change-undercover/>

Brady, J. (2021, July 1). *Exxon Lobbyist Caught On Video Talking About Undermining Biden's Climate Push*. NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/07/01/1012138741/exxon-lobbyist-caught-on-video-talks-about-undermining-bidens-climate-push>