

United States Senate

October 20, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to express my alarm over the current state of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Your decision to deplete the SPR emboldens our enemies abroad and does little to help hardworking Americans who are struggling under high prices at the gas pump. Draining our stockpiles is not a long-term energy strategy and there is only one real solution to the current energy crisis: unleash American energy.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is the world's largest stockpile of emergency crude oil with the capacity to store 714 million barrels. The SPR has protected America from major supply disruptions and served as a vital windfall in the event of natural disasters and wars since its creation following the 1973 energy crises, but it was never intended to compensate for domestic policy shortcomings. Since March, you have released 190 million barrels from the SPR, draining our reserves to their lowest point in four decades, with no plan to replenish the losses.

Alarmingly, you suggested that you are open to additional releases after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) recent decision to slash production in addition to the recent announcement of another 15 million barrel release. It is unconscionable for the United States to ask Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Iran for oil while your administration handicaps domestic producers.

Since your first day in office, your administration has stifled American energy. On January 20, 2021, you canceled the Keystone XL Pipeline. With the stroke of a pen, 4,000 projected jobs in Montana were erased and the potential to supply U.S. refiners with 830,000 barrels of crude oil per day disappeared. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs act required the Secretary of Energy to release a report detailing the total number of jobs lost and the impact on consumer energy costs as a result of the cancellation on February 13, 2022. 249 days later that report is still delinquent and Americans are still suffering at the pump. You suspended lease sales in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, placed a moratorium on drilling on federal lands, canceled mandated lease sales in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, and restricted drilling in the Permian Basin. These actions carry a predictable consequence, a consequence that is playing out right now in Europe.

Montanans are still paying nearly twice as much to fuel their car than in January 2021. Manipulating energy reserves to bring gas prices down from historic highs as the midterm elections approach is not an accomplishment, it is a national security risk. My colleagues and I on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee introduced the Strategic Production Response Act to prohibit tapping the SPR unless there is a severe energy supply disruption until your administration issues a plan to increase oil and gas production on federal lands and waters. The solution is clear- cease future withdrawals from the SPR and boost domestic energy production immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Daines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Steve Daines
United States Senator