

March 20, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

Under your leadership, we have seen an era of American energy dominance and increased energy production on federal lands. We are the world leader for oil and natural gas¹, and not only is the United States producing more energy than ever before, we are doing it on fewer wells² as technology and efficiency increase.

Not only do these increases in production mean more energy security for Americans at home and an ability to supply our allies abroad, they are also greatly benefitting state and federal budgets and local communities. The federal government collected \$3.8B in royalties in 2019 alone, and this sent \$214.9M to states for use on coastal restoration and other priorities. In short, we have a vested interest in continued production of oil and gas on U.S. federal lands beyond simply the product it brings to the pump.

However, in the last couple of weeks we have seen actions on the world stage that have added to volatility in the U.S. and global energy markets. Russia and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have recently announced plans to increase output. Combined with the demand shock induced by the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, these two factors have disrupted the global oil market and caused a dramatic drop in oil prices.

While Americans benefit from paying lower prices at the pump as we have increasingly become an energy-exporting nation, there has come a point where prices are falling *too* low, which is harmful to the American economy. This has compounded a situation for our small businesses—including oil producers—who are desperately trying to employ thousands of workers in time of public health crisis.

Our preference clearly should be to maintain and promote U.S. oil production, rather than witness a shift in oil production from the U.S. to countries like Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Such a shift in production would bring with it the destruction of U.S. jobs, a decline in revenues for important programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, adverse impacts to our national security and geopolitical leverage, and even adverse environmental consequences. As part of a strong and diverse offshore energy system, thousands upon thousands of U.S. companies write paychecks to hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers, supporting communities throughout the Gulf Coast and in many other areas of the country. Our government should consider policy steps to preserve these high-paying jobs and make sure that the U.S. retains the advantages of homegrown oil production.

¹ <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=40973>

² <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=42715>

We do not believe the American energy sector needs a bailout from Congress. However, the Department of the Interior has *existing* authority to temporarily reduce or eliminate royalties set forth in the leases in the Western and Central Planning Areas of the Gulf of Mexico and other lease areas³. In the past, the Department has used this authority to increase development and production⁴.

Given this, we urge you to examine the viability of a temporary reduction in royalties as domestic energy producers weather this combination of an OPEC-driven price war and an epidemic that is driving millions of people around the world into quarantines of one kind or another. Such an action in the short term will help mitigate a price war that is sinking prices and decreasing production.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rep. Dan Crenshaw

Rep. Randy K. Weber

Rep. Clay Higgins

Rep. Mike Johnson

Rep. Bill Flores

Rep. Chip Roy

Rep. Bruce Westerman

Rep. Ralph Abraham, M.D

Rep. Lizzie Fletcher

Rep. Kevin Hern

Rep. Jeff Duncan

Rep. Brian Babin

Rep. Michael C. Burgess, M.D.

Rep. Michael Cloud

³ 43 USC 1337(a)(3)(A); 43 USC 1337(a)(3)(B)

⁴ [30 C.F.R. Part 203](#)

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

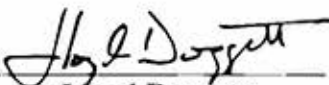
Now that the Families First Coronavirus Response Act has been adopted with bipartisan support, we respectfully urge you to assure that any uninsured Texan who receives a physician's recommendation for a COVID-19 test can get that test for free. Under the measure just passed, you are empowered to expand Medicaid eligibility for all uninsured individuals in Texas by submitting a State Plan Amendment. While aware that you have strongly opposed Medicaid expansion, this specific expansion is solely for testing and requires no state funding.

To overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, we must identify its scope by determining who is infected to mitigate community spread and assure necessary treatment. Many among the 5 million uninsured Texans will otherwise not seek testing, leaving all in our community at risk. We request your approval for Texas to accept federal funds by expanding the Texas Medicaid program for COVID-19 testing for our vulnerable neighbors.

Further, we ask that you join in our call to HHS Secretary Alex Azar to reopen the Federal Marketplace through a Special Enrollment Period under the Affordable Care Act. An estimated 1.1 million uninsured Texans are eligible for free Marketplace coverage right now. A Special Enrollment Period will allow more people to get coverage during this crisis, making all of our community safer.

We stand ready to assist in any way we can to protect the public health of the millions of Texans we all serve. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Lloyd Doggett



Lizzie Fletcher



Veronica Escobar



Marc Veasey


Filemón Vela


Vicente Gonzalez


Joaquin Castro


Eddie Bernice Johnson


Sheila Jackson Lee

Sylvia Garcia

Sylvia Garcia

Henry Cuellar

Henry Cuellar

Colin Allred

Colin Allred

Al Green

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express deep concern over the level of assistance being provided to American citizens stranded abroad as they try to return home to the United States amidst the rapid spread of COVID-19.

We have heard from an alarming number of constituents whose family members have been unable to leave certain affected areas due to closed borders, movement restrictions, mandatory quarantines, and canceled flights. They have contacted us from Peru, Morocco, the Philippines, Honduras, China, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, and several other countries looking for clear guidance as they navigate this difficult and frightening landscape to return home to their families. In some instances, constituents informed us that they have been unable to establish any level of communication with U.S. Embassy and Consular personnel.

Additionally, there has been conflicting reports on the State Department's efforts to help Americans return to the United States. We appreciate the swift action the State Department took to arrange charter flights to evacuate American citizens stuck in the quarantine zone in China. However, recent news reports have indicated that as a matter of policy, the Department will not arrange additional chartered flights to the United States. Yet, last night, the State Department and the U.S. Mission to Morocco announced special charter flights for U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, leading to more confusion for American citizens stranded in other countries. This was after the State Department released a Global Level 4 Health Advisory that stated: "If you decide to travel abroad or are already outside the United States: [h]ave a travel plan that does not rely on the U.S. Government for assistance."

While we appreciate the immense strain State Department personnel around the world are under, providing support and assistance to American citizens abroad must remain the top priority. To that end, we urge the State Department to take immediate and comprehensive action, including working with other federal agencies, foreign governments, and commercial airlines to ensure that every American abroad who wants to return home during this public health crisis can safely do so.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

**List of All Cosigners
Letter to Secretary Pompeo
Americans Abroad – COVID 19**

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.	Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Angie Craig	Jim Cooper
Antonio Delgado	Jimmy Panetta
Barbara Lee	John Garamendi
Ben McAdams	Joseph D. Morelle
Bill Pascrell, Jr.	Kathleen M. Rice
C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger	Lizzie Fletcher
Carolyn B. Maloney	Lori Trahan
Cedric L. Richmond	Mark Pocan
Cindy Axne	Mark Takano
Colin Allred	Matt Cartwright
Darren Soto	Max Rsoe
David Price	Mike Doyle
Dean Phillips	Mike Thompson
Debbie Dingell	Paul D. Tonko
Debbie Mucarsel-Powell	Peter A. DeFazio
Dina Titus	Rashida Tlaib
Donald M. Payne, Jr.	Raúl M. Grijalva
Donald S. Beyer Jr.	Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Donna E. Shalala	Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Earl Blumenauer	Ro Khanna
Elaine G. Luria	Rosa L. DeLauro
Eleanor Holmes Norton	Salud Carbajal
Grace F. Napolitano	Sean Patrick Maloney
Grace Meng	Sharice L. Davids
Greg Stanton	Stacey E. Plaskett
Gwen Moore	Steve Cohen
James P. McGovern	Steven Horsford
Jan Schakowsky	Terri A. Sewell
Jared Huffman	Thomas R. Suozzi
Jason Crow	Tom Malinowski
Jennifer Wexton	Veronica Escobar
Jerrold Nadler	Yvette D. Clarke

March 18, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President,


We write to request that you urgently exercise your Presidential authority to include the State of Texas in the Presidential Disaster Declaration issued on March 13, 2020 for the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 501 (b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”).

The Administration’s aggressive, whole-of-government efforts to combat the Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) and minimize economic disruption to the nation’s 30 million small businesses has allowed the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to issue revised criteria for states or territories seeking an economic injury declaration related to Coronavirus (COVID-19), which includes the agency’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

We urge you to allow the State of Texas to declare an Economic Injury Disaster and take action to ensure the SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan program has enough funding to help businesses currently under financial stress and at risk of suffering further economic injury due to the pending economic cataclysm. In addition, we request that cash benefits be extended to full and part-time workers who are experiencing reduced income due to fewer hours or lost employment because of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

_____/s_____
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress