

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-107, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Hoyer:

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every corner of American life and we appreciate your swift and effective leadership to provide economic and other support to American workers and businesses it is impacting. As you continue your work to address the public health and economic crisis arising from the COVID-19 epidemic in this country, we stand ready to work with you on policies to help families, workers, and businesses in every one of our communities and across the country.

As Democrats that represent many people who work in the oil and natural gas industry and their families, we want to reiterate the important role this industry plays in the American economy, and the tremendous impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their lives and livelihoods.

The oil and natural gas explorers, producers, drilling contractors, transporters, and refiners in our districts are no different than Americans in other struggling businesses across our country. The entire energy industry is facing unprecedented challenges, like so many others throughout our country. The important public health measures taken to combat COVID-19 have caused a massive reduction in consumer demand and a sharp decline in industrial output, here at home and around the world. In March alone, more than 50,000 Americans who work in America's oil and natural gas sector lost their jobs. By all accounts, these numbers will only get worse in the coming months.

We are disappointed that some members of our caucus have recently called for people who work in the oil and natural gas industry to be excluded from aid available to Americans. This is not consistent with our values as Democrats, or in the interest of our country. House Democrats believe in putting American families first and of ensuring that we do our work for the people. Americans across the country are suffering, whether they work in our nation's ports, our hospitals, our hotels and restaurants, or our oilfields. And in our work to support the people in need, it is inconsistent with our values to support only some of those people who need help.

We recognize that the national conversation about our energy future is one of great importance, and we are all active participants in that conversation on behalf of our constituents. Indeed, many members are surprised to learn about the work that goes on each day in our districts and across the oil and gas industry to address shared concerns about carbon dioxide emissions, methane emissions, and safety. The conversation about these and other important issues will continue, and there are many opportunities ahead to partner to address them.

In this moment of great need, however, it is against our values and against our shared interests to include prohibitions on relief for workers and families in the oil and gas industry. Contrary to what some have suggested, the oil and natural gas producers in our states are not asking for a “corporate bailout.” They are asking for fair treatment. They are asking to be included in programs they qualify for, like other struggling businesses across the country who have seen demand for their goods and services decrease dramatically. Operators and companies that cannot access loan programs face the very problems these programs have been designed to address: laying-off workers, reducing operations, and potentially filing for bankruptcy. Those actions, many of which are already taking place, are devastating to local communities and municipalities throughout the districts we represent.

As you continue to work to bring meaningful legislation to address the COVID-19 crisis, we ask that you keep fairness in mind and reject the calls to exclude people from these important aid programs on an industry-by-industry basis. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your leadership for the people.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



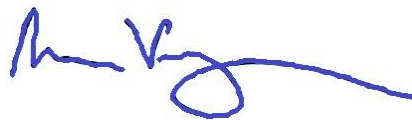
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Kendra S. Horn
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress