

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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MEMORANDUM

April 16, 2020

To: Members of the Subcommittee on Environment

Fr: Committee Staff

Re: Remote Hearing on “The Role of Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Preventing Action on the Climate Crisis”

On **Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. E.T.**, the Subcommittee on Environment will hold a remote hearing on “The Role of Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Preventing Action on the Climate Crisis.”

I. HEARING PURPOSE

This hearing will examine the role of fossil fuel subsidies in preventing government action on the global climate crisis. Through the tax code, royalty rates, and direct funding, the U.S. government provides large subsidies to fossil fuel companies, which conservative estimates put at about \$20 billion per year.¹ Fossil fuels constitute the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions, which are the primary contributor to climate change. The U.S. is the second-largest producer of fossil fuel CO₂ emissions in the world, producing 5.41 metric gigatons (GT) annually.²

The hearing will also focus on the harm to human health of fossil fuel pollution and the industry’s siting of wells, refining facilities, and pipelines. Fossil fuel use releases harmful pollutants like particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and mercury into the air and water. These pollutants and the diseases they cause are concentrated among residents of vulnerable communities.³

¹ *Dirty Energy Dominance: Dependent on Denial—How the U.S. Fossil Fuel Industry Depends on Subsidies and Climate Denial*, Oil Change International (Oct. 2017) (online at http://priceofoil.org/content/uploads/2017/10/OCI_US-Fossil-Fuel-Subs-2015-16_Final_Oct2017.pdf).

² Union of Concerned Scientists, *Each Country’s Share of CO₂ Emissions* (Aug. 12, 2020) (online at www.ucsusa.org/resources/each-country-s-share-co2-emissions).

³ Environmental and Energy Study Institute, *Fact Sheet | Fossil Fuel Subsidies: A Closer Look at Tax Breaks and Societal Costs* (July 29, 2019) (online at www.eesi.org/papers/view/fact-sheet-fossil-fuel-subsidies-a-closer-look-at-tax-breaks-and-societal-costs).

II. WITNESSES

Greta Thunberg

Climate Activist

Tara Houska

Founder

Giniw Collective

Joseph Aldy

Professor of the Practice of Public Policy

Harvard University

Peter Erickson

Climate Policy Program Director

Stockholm Environmental Institute

Jill Antares Hunkler

Seventh-Generation Ohio Valley Resident

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