

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**October 25, 2021**

**To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform**

**Fr: Committee Staff**

**Re: Hearing on “Fueling the Climate Crisis: Exposing Big Oil’s Disinformation Campaign to Prevent Climate Action”**

On **Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.**, the Committee on Oversight and Reform will hold a hybrid hearing **in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and on the Zoom video platform** to evaluate the fossil fuel industry’s efforts in connection with climate change, including efforts to promote climate disinformation and oppose meaningful reform.

**I. BACKGROUND**

Climate change poses an existential threat to people in the United States and around the world, and delays in addressing this crisis have made implementing effective solutions far more difficult. The fossil fuel industry has possessed scientific evidence about the dangers of climate change for many years but has sought to block reforms by claiming that the science about climate change was unsettled.<sup>1</sup> More recently, some companies have taken public stances in support of action on global warming,<sup>2</sup> even as they continue private efforts to block meaningful

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<sup>1</sup> *Big Oil and Gas Kept a Dirty Secret For Decades. Now They May Pay the Price*, The Guardian (June 30, 2021) (online at [www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/30/climate-crimes-oil-and-gas-environment](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/30/climate-crimes-oil-and-gas-environment)).

<sup>2</sup> Chevron, *Chevron Supports Well-Designed Climate Policy* (online at [www.chevron.com/sustainability/environment/climate-policy](http://www.chevron.com/sustainability/environment/climate-policy)) (accessed Aug. 19, 2021); Energy Factor by ExxonMobil, *Reaffirming Our Commitment to the Paris Agreement* (Jan. 20, 2021) (online at <https://energyfactor.exxonmobil.com/insights/partners/commitment-paris-agreement/>); *Shell Sets Emission Ambition of Net Zero by 2050, with Customer Help*, Reuters (Apr. 16, 2020) (online at [www.reuters.com/article/us-shell-emissions/shell-sets-emission-ambition-of-net-zero-by-2050-with-customerhelp-idUSKCN21Y0MW](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-shell-emissions/shell-sets-emission-ambition-of-net-zero-by-2050-with-customerhelp-idUSKCN21Y0MW)); *BP’s New CEO Pledges Net Zero Emissions By 2050*, CNN (Feb. 12, 2020) (online at [www.cnn.com/2020/02/12/business/bp-net-zero/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/02/12/business/bp-net-zero/index.html)).

solutions and continuing to invest in fossil fuel extraction.<sup>3</sup> Oil and gas companies have also outsourced climate-related lobbying to trade associations and local “astroturf” campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

On September 16, 2021, the Committee sent letters to fossil fuel industry executives requesting their appearance at a hearing on October 28, 2021, and seeking documents related to the industry’s marketing, advertising, and lobbying efforts on climate change.<sup>5</sup>

## **II. HEARING PURPOSE**

The purpose of the hearing is to evaluate the fossil fuel industry’s efforts related to climate change, including efforts to promote disinformation and block meaningful reform.

## **III. WITNESSES**

**Mr. Darren Woods**  
Chief Executive Officer  
ExxonMobil Corporation

**Mr. David Lawler**  
Chief Executive Officer  
BP America Inc.

**Mr. Michael K. Wirth**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Chevron Corporation

**Ms. Gretchen Watkins**  
President  
Shell Oil Company

**Mr. Mike Sommers**  
President  
American Petroleum Institute

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<sup>3</sup> *Top Oil Companies Spending Millions to Block Climate Change Policies, Says Report*, The Guardian (Mar. 21, 2019) (online at [www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/22/top-oil-firms-spending-millions-lobbying-to-block-climate-change-policies-says-report](http://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/22/top-oil-firms-spending-millions-lobbying-to-block-climate-change-policies-says-report)).

<sup>4</sup> *E.g., See Who’s Spending the Most on Colorado’s Oil-Well Setback Ballot Fight*, Denver Business Journal (Oct. 10, 2018) (online at [www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2018/10/10/colorado-proposition-112-well-setback-donors.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2018/10/10/colorado-proposition-112-well-setback-donors.html)); *Prop 112 Fails as Voters Say No to Larger Setbacks for Oil and Gas*, Denver Post (Nov. 6, 2018) (online at [www.denverpost.com/2018/11/06/colorado-proposition-112-results/](http://www.denverpost.com/2018/11/06/colorado-proposition-112-results/)).

<sup>5</sup> Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: Oversight Committee Launches Investigation of Fossil Fuel Industry Disinformation on Climate Crisis* (Sep. 16, 2021) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/oversight-committee-launches-investigation-of-fossil-fuel-industry>).

**Ms. Suzanne Clark**  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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