

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

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM  
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

**MEMORANDUM**

**February 3, 2022**

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

**Fr: Committee Staff**

**Re: Hearing on “Fueling the Climate Crisis: Examining Big Oil’s Climate Pledges”**

On **Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. ET**, 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 examine the adequacy of climate pledges made by fossil fuel companies to reduce carbon emissions and curb global warming.

**I. BACKGROUND**

The international scientific community has warned for years about the need to limit global warming to 1.5° C in order to avoid severe harm to ecosystems and human populations.<sup>1</sup> In recognition of this threat, multiple countries, including the United States, entered into the Paris Agreement in 2015 and committed to global action to curb disastrous warming, which requires the world to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by midcentury.<sup>2</sup> According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, limiting the globe’s rising temperature and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement requires a “rapid and immediate global reduction of greenhouse gases and CO<sub>2</sub>.”<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, many major fossil fuel companies have announced climate pledges and ambitions, promising to transition their companies to net-zero carbon emissions consistent with

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Conference of the Parties, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement*, U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/rev.1 (Dec. 12, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Climate Change, *The Paris Agreement* (online at [www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement](http://www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement)) (accessed Jan. 26, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Special Report of the Global Warming of 1.5° C* (Oct. 2018) (online at [www.ipcc.ch/sr15/](http://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/)). “Net-Zero” or “Net-Negative” emissions signifies achieving an overall balance between—or “zeroing out”—the carbon emissions produced with carbon emissions removed from the atmosphere. See Environmental Protection Agency, *Net Zero Resources* (online at [www.epa.gov/water-research/net-zero-resources](http://www.epa.gov/water-research/net-zero-resources)) (accessed Feb. 1, 2022).

the Paris Agreement.<sup>4</sup> However, experts have warned that many of these pledges rely on unproven technology and questionable methods for calculating carbon offsets, and do not address significant portions of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel products.<sup>5</sup>

## II. HEARING PURPOSE

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the adequacy of climate pledges made by the fossil fuel industry to reduce carbon emissions and curb global warming.

## III. WITNESSES

**Dr. Michael E. Mann**  
Professor of Atmospheric Science  
Pennsylvania State University

**Mr. Mark van Baal**  
Founder  
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**Ms. Tracey Lewis**  
Policy Counsel  
Public Citizen

Staff contacts: Greta Gao, Katie Thomas, Daniel Yim, Aria Kovalovich, Charnele Dernbach, Kevin Fox, Kristien Knapp, and Taylor Edwards at (202) 225-5051.

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<sup>4</sup> BP, *Press Release: From International Oil Company to Integrated Energy Company: BP Sets Out Strategy for Decade of Delivery Towards Net Zero Ambition* (Aug. 4, 2020) (online at [www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/news-and-insights/press-releases/from-international-oil-company-to-integrated-energy-company.pdf](http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/news-and-insights/press-releases/from-international-oil-company-to-integrated-energy-company.pdf)); Chevron, *Press Release: Chevron Sets Net Zero Aspiration and New GHG Intensity Target* (Oct. 11, 2021) (online at [www.chevron.com/stories/chevron-sets-net-zero-aspiration-and-new-ghg-intensity-target](http://www.chevron.com/stories/chevron-sets-net-zero-aspiration-and-new-ghg-intensity-target)); ExxonMobil, *Press Release: ExxonMobil Announces Ambition for Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2050* (Jan. 18, 2022) (online at [https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/News/Newsroom/News-releases/2022/0118\\_ExxonMobil-announces-ambition-for-net-zero-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-2050](https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/News/Newsroom/News-releases/2022/0118_ExxonMobil-announces-ambition-for-net-zero-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-2050)); Royal Dutch Shell PLC, *Shell Energy Transition Strategy* (2021) (online at [www.shell.com/promos/energy-and-innovation/shell-energy-transition-strategy/\\_jcr\\_content.stream/1618407326759/7c3d5b317351891d2383b3e9f1e511997e516639/shell-energy-transition-strategy-2021.pdf](http://www.shell.com/promos/energy-and-innovation/shell-energy-transition-strategy/_jcr_content.stream/1618407326759/7c3d5b317351891d2383b3e9f1e511997e516639/shell-energy-transition-strategy-2021.pdf)).

<sup>5</sup> *As More Companies Make Net-Zero Pledges, Some Aren't as Good as They Sound*, Time (Nov. 15, 2021) (online at <https://time.com/6117635/companies-net-zero-greenwash/>).