



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 28, 2021

## Biden Administration Sued Over Executive Order Halting Oil and Gas Leasing

President Joe Biden didn't have to wait long to get an industry response to his [executive order](#) putting a halt to any new leases for natural gas and oil exploration on federal property. On Wednesday, Western Energy Alliance — a group that represents more than 200 gas and energy companies across 13 Western states — filed a Petition for Review of Government Action in the U.S. District Court in Wyoming.

Western Energy Alliance claims that Biden, along with acting Secretary of the Interior Scott de la Vega and the United States Bureau of Land Management, who were also named as defendants, exceeded his authority with the new dictate that would “pause new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in public waters pending completion of a comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices.”

The executive order also calls for a “rigorous review of all leasing and permitting practices related to fossil fuel development on public lands and waters.” So, the leases already approved are not safe from White House meddling either.

The suit claims that “the suspension [of new oil and gas leases] is both arbitrary and capricious and contrary to law.”

“The law is clear. Presidents don't have authority to ban leasing on public lands. All Americans own the oil and natural gas beneath public lands, and Congress has directed them to be responsibly developed on their behalf,” said Kathleen Sgamma, the president of Western Energy Alliance. “Drying up new leasing puts future development as well as existing projects at risk. President Biden cannot simply ignore laws in effect for over half a century.”

Sgamma added, “Biden's ban is an overreach meant to satisfy the environmental left, but it would seriously harm the livelihoods of tens of thousands of westerners and would put at risk millions more as state services become unfunded.”

Biden, on the other hand, claimed that his new approach to climate change will actually create jobs — at some point in the future at least. “Today is climate day at the White House, which means that today is jobs day at the White House. We're talking about American innovation, American products, American labor.”



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Unfortunately, as Biden freely admits, few of the technologies that promise so-called green jobs exist today. On the contrary, yesterday's executive order puts an ax to existing jobs in the energy sector.

Sgamma told *Fox and Friends* on Thursday that Biden's order will end 58,700 jobs in eight states across the West, "where 97 percent of the federal production [of fossil fuels] is found." Sgamma also noted a [study](#) from the American Petroleum Institute, which claims that, as of 2015, more than 10.3 million U.S. jobs were supported by the natural gas and oil industry.

"This notion that killing oil and natural gas is suddenly going to create jobs elsewhere is just a false one," Sgamma said.

Dan Naatz of the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) agreed and referred to the halting of new leases as an outright ban on drilling. "Do not be fooled, this is a ban [on drilling]. The Biden administration's plan to obliterate the jobs of American oil and gas explorers and producers has been on clear display.

"The fiscal and economic losses from President Biden's proposed leasing moratorium on western states from 2021 to 2040 is over \$640 billion," Naatz said in a [statement](#).

Sgamma also pointed out that reducing American oil and natural gas production in the United States merely shifts the necessity for that supply to other nations with far less-stringent environmental regulations for the industry.

"So, if we kill oil and natural gas in the United States, we merely have to import that oil and natural gas from overseas, which doesn't make sense because we produce it here in the United States under very strict environmental regulations — not so much in Russia."

Naatz agreed: "All a leasing ban will do is shift production to Saudi Arabia and Russia, which have far less-stringent environmental controls than American producers."

For the next few years at least, the fight against climate hysteria will, in part, look like this. As Biden and his underlings work hard against common sense and proper scientific and economic reasoning, those who fight against the president's climate proclamations will have to hope that the courts delay and overturn these job-killing and unnecessary actions.



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