

Pushing Back On API's Federal Leasing Pause Comment Letter

SUMMARY: On April 15, 2021, API's Vice President Of Upstream Policy Kevin O'Scannlain wrote a letter addressed to Interior Secretary Deb Halland to respond to the Biden administration's review of the federal oil and gas leasing program. O'Scannlain talks out of both sides of his mouth in the letter—at once claiming to support the oil leasing review and calling for the leasing pause to be halted.

O'Scannlain most recently worked for Trump Administration as a political appointee where he worked on deregulating the oil industry and helping with the Trump administration's anti-conservation, drill-at-all-costs policies.

The bulk of API's letter highlights API's so-called "Climate Action Framework," an attempt to greenwash big oil's disastrous climate record by supporting toothless, disingenuous policies. Accountable.US has debunked API's Climate Action Framework."

API Wrote A Rambling Letter To Interior Claiming To Support The Federal Oil Leasing Review While At The Same Time Asking To Keep Leasing New Public Lands As Usual

API Wrote A Letter To Interior Claiming To Support The Federal Oil Leasing Review While At The Same Time Asking To Keep Leasing New Public Lands As Usual

API Said It Supports Working With The Administration To Make The Federal Oil Leasing Program Better For The Climate

API Says It Supports The Interior's Review Of The Federal Leasing Program. "API supports DOI's efforts to consider modifications to federal mineral leasing with full opportunity for public engagement. The issues are complex, and a multi-year rulemaking effort likely will ensue." [API Letter To Interior, [04/15/21](#)]

- **API Even Said It Wants To Work With The Biden Administration To Reform The Leasing Program To Address Climate Considerations.** "API appreciates the opportunity to provide our views on the current federal oil and natural gas program... Industry remains committed to working with President Biden and his administration to address climate considerations in the federal oil and natural gas program and meet our shared goals while still maintaining a robust U.S. industry." [API Letter To Interior, [04/15/21](#)]

But At The Same Time, API Called For The Temporary Pause On New Leases During The Review To End

Headline: API Underscores Importance Of Federal Oil And Gas Program, Urges DOI To End Federal Leasing Pause. [API Press Release, [04/15/21](#)]

API Said That Interior “Need Not” Pause The Current Leasing Program While It Was Being Reviewed. “Lastly, and as with most subjects in this comprehensive review of the federal oil and gas program, the Interior Department need not institute a pause on new leasing to optimize policy improvements on the bonding and financial assurance regime.” [API Letter To Interior, [04/15/21](#)]

API’s Letter Was Written By A Trump Interior Official Who Helped The Last Administration Deregulate The Oil Industry

Kevin O’Scannlain Is An Oilman Whose Most Recent Trip Through The Revolving Door Took Him From Trump’s Interior Department To API

API’s Letter Was Written By API Vice President of Upstream Policy Kevin O’Scannlain. “The American Petroleum Institute (API) today submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) on the importance of continued natural gas and oil leasing and development on federal lands and waters for U.S. economic growth and climate progress. API Vice President of Upstream Policy Kevin O’Scannlain urged Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to account for the economic and environmental benefits that federal natural gas and oil production provides to local communities and the entire country during the department’s review of the program and expeditiously lift the federal leasing pause.” [API Press Release, [04/15/21](#)]

Kevin O’Scannlain Joined The American Petroleum Institute After Serving As The Deputy Solicitor For Energy And Natural Resources In Trump’s Interior Department. “Kevin O’Scannlain, Interior’s former deputy solicitor for energy and natural resources, joined the American Petroleum Institute yesterday.” [E&E News, [03/16/21](#)]

- **O’Scannlain Worked On Major Regulatory Rollbacks Including Efforts To Attack Waters Of The US And Clean Energy Rule.** “He had also worked in the White House under former President Trump as senior associate counsel. In that role, he worked on high-profile regulatory rollbacks, including the now-scraped Affordable Clean Energy rule, as well as fuel economy requirements and the Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS, rule.” [E&E News, [03/16/21](#)]
- **O’Scannlain Previously Worked At Chevron.** “O’Scannlain previously served for five years as senior counsel for Chevron Corp.” [E&E News, [03/16/21](#)]

The Trump Administration’s Environmental Legacy Is Deregulation And Oil Drilling Above All Else

The Trump Administration Rolled Back Over 125 Environmental Rules And Stymied Previous Efforts To Mitigate Climate change. “But over the course of nearly four years, his administration has steadily loosened oversight of polluting industries, eroded protections for

endangered wildlife and stymied Obama-era efforts to address the globe's most daunting environmental threat: climate change. A Washington Post analysis has found that as Trump's first term winds to a close, he has weakened or wiped out more than 125 rules and policies aimed at protecting the nation's air, water and land, with 40 more rollbacks underway. ”
[*Washington Post*, [10/30/20](#)]

API's Letter Cites Its "Climate Action Framework." An Accountable.US Analysis Debunks That Framework

API Used The Letter To Argue That The Oil Industry Is Committed To Fighting Climate Change

API Used Much Of Its 30-Page Letter To Highlight Its Recently Developed "Climate Action Framework." "The oil and natural gas industry shares the Administration's goals of achieving economywide emissions reductions, while maintaining our global energy leadership and providing affordable, reliable energy to the American people. We are eager to partner with this Administration to develop workable climate solutions, and API's Climate Action Framework2 ("CAF" or "Framework") works to accelerate this progress. The Framework represents our industry's commitment to lead the way on producing cleaner energy and lowering greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We believe we can achieve both by working together with government and other stakeholders." [API Letter To Interior, [04/15/21](#)]

RHETORIC: Big Oil Is Pushing Alternative Ways To Combat Climate Change While Still Relying On Fossil Fuels

API's Industry Action Plan Including Accelerating Technology And Innovation Including Carbon Capture And Hydrogen Technology. "Accelerate Technology and Innovation to reduce emissions while meeting growing energy needs: Advocate for Federal Funding for Low-Carbon RD&D; Fast-track the Commercial Deployment of Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS); Advance Hydrogen Technology, Innovation, and Infrastructure" [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

- **API CEO Mike Sommers Noted Interest In Working With The Biden Administration To Fund Oil And Gas "Innovation."** "We've had a number of programs at API where we seek to address these issues, but I think we also need to keep in mind ... what the current energy reality is. ... API member companies are investing billions of dollars every single year with innovations like carbon capture utilization and storage technologies, and we ... want to work with President Biden to make sure that these programs are fully funded." [API, [03/02/21](#)]

API Is Asking For "Full Federal Funding" Of Carbon Capture Technology. "This technology is advanced by the 45Q tax credit, providing support for CCUS deployment, and by increased federal research and development funding, which was a focus in recent federal legislation. API is pushing for full federal funding of research, development and deployment (RD&D)

programs, authorized in the bipartisan Energy Act of 2020.” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

Fossil Fuel Producers, Utilities, And Trade Union Announced A New Push For “Clean” Hydrogen And Carbon Capture, Asking For Incentives For Low-Carbon Hydrogen Production. “Several of the country's largest utilities, fossil fuel producers and trade unions announced a new coalition yesterday to push for "clean" hydrogen — including the "blue" kind derived from natural gas and paired with carbon capture. [...] The companies and groups say they want new incentives for low-carbon hydrogen production that would bring down the cost for a variety of end applications, like buildings and heavy industry, while using existing fossil fuel infrastructure.” [E&E News, [03/23/21](#)]

- **Chevron Is A Member Of The Coalition.** “Members include oil and gas giant Chevron Corp.; utilities Duke Energy Corp., Southern Co., Sempra Energy and the Tennessee Valley Authority; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and North America's Building Trades Union; and carbon capture company Wabash Valley Resources.” [E&E News, [03/23/21](#)]

REALITY: “Clean” Alternatives Lack Clear Scientific Evidence About Their Efficacy, With API Itself Acknowledging The Tech For Net-Zero Isn’t There

Environmentalists Have Raised Concerns Over Carbon Capture Technology And Blue Hydrogen That Still Relies On Fossil Fuels And The Lack Of Clear Science Around It. “The coalition's letter was criticized by environmentalists, who said it promoted types of hydrogen that would prove harmful to the climate and front-line communities. [...] But blue hydrogen is especially fraught as a climate tool because of its reliance on fossil fuels, according to critics. A growing chorus of energy researchers and environmentalists is also warning that the emissions profiles of various types of hydrogen are highly variant and often not well-studied.” [E&E News, [03/23/21](#)]

Previous Carbon Capture Plans Have “Struggled To Show Long-Term Commercial Success.” “At the same time, legislation that passed Congress late last year calls on DOE to deploy large carbon capture demonstration projects on coal- and natural gas-fired power plants, building off efforts that began during the George W. Bush administration, but that have often struggled to show long-term commercial success.” [E&E News, [03/22/21](#)]

API CEO Mike Sommers Dismissed Net-Zero Goals As “Aspirational” But Lacking Technology Or Cost Efficiency. “Sommers said net-zero pledges at the moment "are mainly just aspirational, because for most emitters, the technology just isn't there yet, or it's not cost-effective to get there.” [E&E News, [03/02/21](#)]

Carbon Air Capture Plans Are Not Guaranteed To Solve Climate Problems Even If All Other Barriers To Their Development And Implementation Are Passed. “Even if we agree to build 30,000 industrial scale DAC plants, find the chemical materials to run them, and the money to pay for it all, we won't be out of the woods yet. In fact, we might end up in a worse position than before, thanks to a phenomenon known as mitigation deterrence.” [BBC, [03/11/21](#)]

REALITY: API's Plan Continues Our Reliance On Fossil Fuels, Ignoring All The Associated Health And Environmental Risk

Environmentalists Have Raised Concerns Over Carbon Capture Technology And Blue Hydrogen That Still Relies On Fossil Fuels And The Lack Of Clear Science Around It. “The coalition's letter was criticized by environmentalists, who said it promoted types of hydrogen that would prove harmful to the climate and front-line communities. [...] But blue hydrogen is especially fraught as a climate tool because of its reliance on fossil fuels, according to critics. A growing chorus of energy researchers and environmentalists is also warning that the emissions profiles of various types of hydrogen are highly variant and often not well-studied.” [*E&E News*, [03/23/21](#)]

Carbon Capture Address Emissions From The Source, Failing To Account For Emissions That Occur When People Use Fossil Fuels. “Most carbon capture focuses on cleaning emissions at the source: scrubbers and filters on smokestacks that prevent harmful gases reaching the atmosphere. But this is impractical for small, numerous point sources like the planet's billion or so automobiles.” [*BBC*, [03/11/21](#)]

The Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change Emphasized The Need To Reduce Emissions, Not Just Rely On Greenhouse Gas Removal. “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggests that the world can keep global warming in check if emissions are cut in half by 2030, compared to 2010 levels, and reach net-zero by mid-century. However, it also states a need for greenhouse gas removal beyond net-zero emissions targets.” [*KRQE*, [03/28/21](#)]

1 In 5 Deaths Globally In 2018 Were Caused Pollution From Fossil Fuels. “Soot pollution generated by the burning of fossil fuels was responsible for 8.7 million premature deaths globally in 2018, a far higher toll than previously estimated, researchers at Harvard University and other schools concluded in newly released findings. The total amounted to almost 1 in 5 deaths for that year, with China and India bearing the bulk of the burden, according to the paper, published online today in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Research*, and an accompanying press release.” [*E&E News*, [02/09/21](#)]

In 2021, ExxonMobil Revealed That 570MMetric Tons Of Emissions Come From Use Of Its Products. “Exxon Mobil Corp. yesterday revealed for the first time the amount of greenhouse gases that are released by using its products. The company estimated that it was responsible for the equivalent of 570 million metric tons of so-called Scope 3 emissions in 2019. That's roughly as much as Saudi Arabia's total annual carbon dioxide emissions, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.” [*E&E News*, [01/06/21](#)]

API's About-Face On Methane And Greenhouse Gas Emissions Comes After Years Of Empty Promises, Praising Rollbacks, And Actively Opposing Regulations

RHETORIC: API Claims To Support Mitigating Emissions And Reducing Flaring And Methane

API's Climate Plan Features Mitigating Emissions From Operations Including Through Methane Regulation And Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions. “Further Mitigate Emissions from Operations to advance additional environmental progress; Advance Direct Regulation of Methane from New and Existing Sources; Develop Methane Detection Technologies; Promote Reductions in Refinery GHG Emissions and Mitigate Upstream Flaring Emissions” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

- **Shell, Exxon Mobil, And BP All Supported Methane Regulations.** “Shell, BP and the Exxon Mobil Corp. have big natural gas portfolios. They worry that if methane emissions aren't controlled that could undermine arguments that natural gas is a cleaner-burning fossil fuel than coal. ‘The negative impacts of leaks and fugitive emissions have been widely acknowledged for years, so it's frustrating and disappointing to see the administration go in a different direction,’ said Gretchen Watkins, Shell's president in the United States.” [NPR, [08/13/20](#)]

REALITY: API Praised Trump For Slashing Methane Regulations – A Gas Responsible For A Quarter Of All Man-Made Global Warming.

The Trump Administration Slashed Regulations On Methane, A Powerful Greenhouse Gas, In 2018. “The Trump administration announced a plan Tuesday to roll back a major Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that restricts emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The EPA said its rollback of former President Obama’s 2015 methane regulation for oil and natural gas drillers would give the industry \$484 million over six years, while reducing unnecessary and duplicative burdens.” [*The Hill*, [09/11/18](#)]

- **API Supported The Rollback Despite The Environmental Effects.** “The American Petroleum Institute called the rule change a welcomed effort Tuesday, noting that the industry itself has already taken its own strides to cap air pollution. [...] Some experts anticipate that the new rule would allow for far more air pollution and leaks of the gas stemming from practices known as flaring or fuel burning. That in turn would allow for a dangerous increase in emissions, environmentalists say.” [*The Hill*, [09/11/18](#)]

API Backed Trump Methane Regulation Rollbacks In August 2020. “In August, API backed the Trump administration's rollback of Obama-era regulations targeting methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, saying at the time that the revisions were consistent with the Clean Air Act.” [*E&E News*, [01/21/21](#)]

- **The EPA's Methane Rollbacks Came As Methane Levels Reached Record Highs Thanks To The Fossil Fuel Industry.** “However, numerous recent studies show the opposite: that methane emissions from drilling sites in the United States are far more extensive than the E.P.A.'s official numbers. Overall, methane levels are in fact climbing steadily nationwide, according to the research, and have reached record highs globally in part because of leaks from fossil fuel production.” [*New York Times*, [08/13/20](#)]

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A Third Of All Methane Emissions Come From The Oil And Gas Industry. “Methane emissions account for approximately 10% of total U.S. GHG emissions on a CO₂-equivalent basis, according to EPA. Among methane sources, EPA finds natural gas and oil production, processing and transmission contribute approximately one-third of U.S. human-caused emissions.” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

- **Methane Accounts For Around 10% Of Greenhouse Gas Emissions But Is Responsible For A Quarter Of All Man-Made Global Warming.** “Methane, which leaks from oil and gas wells, accounts for about 10 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity in the United States, according to E.P.A. data. But it is about 30 times more potent over the course of a century than carbon dioxide in altering the Earth’s climate and is responsible for about a quarter of man-made global warming.” [New York Times, [07/21/20](#)]
- **The EPA Underestimates Methane Release From Oil And Gas Production By As Much As 90%.** “In a study published this month in the journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics, a team of scientists said EPA’s inventory of greenhouse gas emissions is underestimating methane releases from U.S. oil and natural gas production by 90% and 50%, respectively.” [E&E News, [03/30/21](#)]

REALITY: API Has Repeatedly Fought For Lower Emissions Standards And Blocked Regulating Agencies

API Advocated For Relaxed Standards Around A Pollutant Linked To Asthma And Higher Mortality In 2017. “Exxon has told the EPA that estimating a risk of death from particulate matter is “unreliable and misleading” while, in 2017, API demanded the agency relax standards around nitrogen dioxide – a pollutant linked to asthma in children and higher mortality in adults from heart disease and cancer – claiming there was no proven association with harm and existing rules were “more stringent than necessary.” [The Guardian, [03/18/21](#)]

In 2012, API Sued To Try And Stop The EPA From Regulating Nitrogen Dioxide. “A three-judge federal appeals panel on Tuesday upheld the first-ever federal rule protecting people from acute exposure to emissions of nitrogen dioxide, a pollutant implicated in asthma attacks and other respiratory problems. The judges rejected a challenge from the American Petroleum Institute, ruling that both science and the law justified a 2010 decision by the Environmental Protection Agency to limit maximum one-hour concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere to 100 parts per billion.” [New York Times, [07/17/12](#)]

API Ran Campaigns Against An EPA Proposal For Stronger Ozone Rules. “The EPA recently proposed a stronger ozone rule, which the API is battling through ad campaigns, its Congressional allies and in the courts.” [Inside Climate News, archived, [06/06/16](#)]

At The Request Of Oil Companies And Other Industries, EPA Has Relaxed “Enforcement Of Environmental Regulations On Polluting Industries.” “The Trump administration has decided to ease enforcement of environmental regulations covering polluting industries to help them cope with impacts from the coronavirus outbreak, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Thursday. The decision follows requests by the oil

lobby and other industry groups for regulatory relief as governments around the world scramble to contain fallout from the pandemic, which has infected nearly a half a million people, decimated travel, and forced massive disruptions in daily life.” [Reuters, [03/26/20](#)]

API Opposed Tightening Soot Standards After New Research Showed Sharp Increase COVID-19 Mortality. “Those particles, technically known as PM2.5, are associated with a variety of respiratory and cardiovascular ailments; in a study released last week, Harvard University researchers tentatively linked long-term exposure to even slightly higher levels of fine particles to sharply increased odds of death from COVID-19. Under the Clean Air Act, particulate matter is one of a half-dozen pollutants for which EPA must periodically review its National Ambient Air Quality Standards in light of the latest research into their health and environmental effects. Business groups like the American Petroleum Institute and U.S. Chamber of Commerce, however, oppose any change to the status quo for the soot standard.” [E&E News, [04/14/20](#)]

RHETORIC: API Says They Will Promote Reductions In Flaring

API Supports The End Of Routine Flaring. “API supports company efforts toward no routine flaring by a date certain, for example the World Bank’s Zero Flaring Initiative by 2030.” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

REALITY: API Member Companies Have Already Pledged To Reduce Their Flaring, But Flaring Continues To Increase

Flaring Remained A Regular Occurrence Among API Members ExxonMobil And BP Despite Pledges To Stop. “Mounting pressure on the oil industry about its environmental and climate impact has resulted in pledges from a number of organizations to reduce their flaring habits – but new research by Greenpeace’s investigative unit Unearthed reveals the practice remains a regular occurrence across the US’ “big three” oil fields, with oil majors ExxonMobil and BP among the worst offenders. [...] Both ExxonMobil and BP have made commitments to reduce the carbon footprint of their respective operations as part of the global effort to address climate change.” [NS Energy Business, [10/24/19](#)]

Drillers In The US Increased Flaring And Venting Annually From 2017 To 2019. “The U.S. drilling industry flared or vented more natural gas in 2019 for the third year in a row, as soaring production in Texas, New Mexico, and North Dakota overwhelmed regulatory efforts to curb the practice, according to state data and independent research estimates.” [Reuters, [02/03/20](#)]

API Makes A Cynical About-Face On Climate Pricing In Exchange For Deregulation To Calm Internal Dissent

RHETORIC: API’s Plan Supports Carbon Pricing

API Supports Carbon Pricing, “Market-Based Solutions,” And Attention To “Net Emissions.” “Endorse a Carbon Price Policy by government to drive economywide, market-based solutions: Potential Approach Would Price Carbon Dioxide Emissions Across the

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Economy; Support Policies that Provide Transparency for Consumers; Minimize Duplicative Regulations and Help Maintain U.S. Competitiveness; Avoid Carbon Leakage and Integrate with Global Carbon Markets, while Focusing on Net Emissions” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

REALITY: API Is Proposing An Exchange – Carbon Pricing For Their Long-Term Goal Of Deregulation

API’s Support Is Conditional On Regulation Rollbacks. “Endorse a Carbon Price Policy by government to drive economywide, market-based solutions: Potential Approach Would Price Carbon Dioxide Emissions Across the Economy; Support Policies that Provide Transparency for Consumers; Minimize Duplicative Regulations and Help Maintain U.S. Competitiveness; Avoid Carbon Leakage and Integrate with Global Carbon Markets, while Focusing on Net Emissions” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

- **API Would Support Carbon Pricing As An Alternative To Meaningful Climate Policy Fixes.** “But a paper being weighed by an API policy committee would back a carbon tax as an alternative to federal regulation and policies aimed at slowing climate change. And many analysts and lawmakers doubted the sincerity of any such API move because it is highly unlikely Congress would adopt a carbon tax — allowing the trade group to appear to support climate action while risking little.” [*Washington Post*, [03/02/21](#)]

Energy Citizens Ran Ads Opposing A Colorado Bill Regulating the Oil and Gas Industry. “Facebook’s Ad Archive, a tool that tracks and discloses political advertising on the social media platform, lists dozens of sponsored posts from astroturf groups like ‘Energy Citizens’ and ‘Energy Nation’ opposing SB 181 over the last few weeks, all of which were paid for by the American Petroleum Institute. The ads recorded millions of impressions and totaled tens of thousands of dollars in spending, according to Facebook estimates.” [*Westword*, [03/19/19](#)]

- **“Energy Citizens is a creation of the American Petroleum Institute**, the oil industry’s largest trade group. (In 2009, API has spent some \$5.8 million on lobbying, much of it on the climate and energy bills.) A memo from API president Jack Gerard, leaked to Greenpeace, urged his group’s members to ensure “turnouts of several hundred attendees” at supposedly grassroots events like the ones Energy Citizens was sponsoring.” [*Mother Jones*, [12/05/09](#)]

Sommers Praised The Trump Administration’s Rollback Of Public Land Protections From Extractive Industries. “Of course, government regulation helps. We’ve seen with this administration that they’ve allowed a lot more exploration particularly on public lands and that helps as well.” [Podcasts, Radio America News, [02/08/19](#)]

At The Request Of Oil Companies And Other Industries, EPA Has Relaxed “Enforcement Of Environmental Regulations On Polluting Industries.” “The Trump administration has decided to ease enforcement of environmental regulations covering polluting industries to help them cope with impacts from the coronavirus outbreak, the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency said on Thursday. The decision follows requests by the oil lobby and other industry groups for regulatory relief as governments around the world scramble to contain fallout from the pandemic, which has infected nearly a half a million people, decimated travel, and forced massive disruptions in daily life.” [Reuters, [03/26/20](#)]

Oil Production Boomed As Trump Rolled Back Obama-Era Regulations. “U.S. oil production has surged for a decade as improved technology allowed drillers to tap reserves previously impossible to access. The Trump administration has also rolled back environmental regulations, including moving here to rescind Obama-era limits on drilling-industry methane emissions.” [Reuters, [02/03/20](#)]

REALITY: API Is Reversing Its Opposition Only After Pressure And Division Within Its Ranks

API Has Previously Been A Major Opponent To Carbon Pricing. “API was one of the fiercest opponents just more than a decade ago when Congress last considered major legislation on the issue, a plan to have emitters pay and trade for their contributions to climate change.” [Wall Street Journal, [03/01/21](#)]

- **In 2009, Oil And Gas Companies Spent \$175.6M On Lobbying, Much Of That Going To Fight Cap-And-Trade Bills.** “The last time Obama confronted the energy issue was in 2009 with cap-and-trade legislation, which he eventually abandoned to devote energy to the health care overhaul. That year, the oil and gas industry spent a record \$175.6 million on lobbying, much of it to fight cap-and-trade bills, which would have helped curb demand for fossil fuels, according to Center for Responsive Politics research.” [OpenSecrets, [01/23/13](#)]

Some Lobbyists Have Stated Rumors Of Endorsing Carbon Pricing Is Only A Way For API To Calm Debate Amongst Members On Climate Regulations. “Several lobbyists told ME the ‘leaked’ news of a carbon endorsement was merely the API trying to calm warring factions among its membership, which includes a mix of international companies that may not mind a carbon tax if it keeps them in regulators' good graces and those who want to fight against it.” [Politico, [03/03/21](#)]

- **A Carbon Tax Is Still Controversial Within API, With Many Members Opposed To The Policy.** “Internally, many API members staunchly oppose endorsing a carbon tax or imposing standards for the use of renewable energy, according to one person familiar with the internal discussions who described them as “heated.” The organization had similar internal conflicts over its position on methane-emissions regulations, which the Trump administration had moved to undo at the request of independent producers.” [Wall Street Journal, [03/01/21](#)]

API Tries To Position Gas As “Clean” Despite Huge Emissions While Supporting Transportation Emissions Reductions After Active Opposition

RHETORIC: API Supports “Cleaner Fuels” By Positioning Gas As A Better Alternative To Coal

API's Action Plans Seeks To Advance "Cleaner Fuels," Supporting Lower-Carbon Electricity And Reduced Lifecycle Emissions While Pushing US Natural Gas. "Advance Cleaner Fuels to provide lower-carbon choices for consumers: Develop Markets for Differentiated U.S. Natural Gas; Support Policies to Advance Lower-Carbon Electricity; Reduce Lifecycle Emissions in the Transportation Sector." [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

API's CEO Praises Successful Industry-Led Efforts To Lower Emissions By Comparing Them To Coal Emissions That Are 50% Dirtier Than Natural Gas Emissions. "Because natural gas is so much cleaner - 50% cleaner than coal – the United States today has the lowest emissions than any developed country. [...] That wasn't something that a government told the industry to do, it was really because of innovation in our industry and we're really proud that we now today see a cleaner environment as a consequence of American innovation and American ingenuity." [Facebook, [10/07/20](#)]

REALITY: API Has Opposed Climate-Friendly Policies While Attempting To Position Itself As Environmentally Friendly

Mike Sommers Dismissed Questions That The Oil And Gas Industry Changed Its Terminology To Appear More Environmentally Friendly. "'Oil and gas,' the long-standing terminology used by industry, finance, government and others, is out. Instead, the American Petroleum Institute has largely switched to 'natural gas and oil,' putting the low-carbon fuel front and center. [...] Asked about the terminology, Sommers downplayed any difference. 'Sometimes, we use 'gas and oil'; sometimes, we use 'oil and gas.' There's no definitive moment when we're using one or the other. I think we use them interchangeably," he told reporters after his speech." [E&E News, [01/08/20](#)]

API And Its Allies Have Successfully Opposed Climate-Friendly Policies In At Least 16 Different States" And Slowed The Growth Of Zero-Carbon Energy. "But climate activists have not been alone in switching focus to local politics: The oil industry has also pivoted. In the past few years, the American Petroleum Institute (API) and its allies have activated at the local level, fighting against—and occasionally beating back—climate-friendly policies in at least 16 different states. This surge of local activism has succeeded in slowing the growth of electric-vehicle sales and zero-carbon energy, experts say." [The Atlantic, [02/18/21](#)]

At The Request Of Oil Companies And Other Industries, EPA Has Relaxed "Enforcement Of Environmental Regulations On Polluting Industries." "The Trump administration has decided to ease enforcement of environmental regulations covering polluting industries to help them cope with impacts from the coronavirus outbreak, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Thursday. The decision follows requests by the oil lobby and other industry groups for regulatory relief as governments around the world scramble to contain fallout from the pandemic, which has infected nearly a half a million people, decimated travel, and forced massive disruptions in daily life." [Reuters, [03/26/20](#)]

REALITY: Oil And Gas Companies Still Emit Huge Amounts Of Greenhouse Gases With Natural Gas Polluting More Than Coal In 2019

In 12 Months, Oil And Gas Companies In The Permian Basin Released Roughly The Same Amount Of Annual Emissions As 10 Coal Fired Power Stations Through Flaring Or Venting Alone. “In the 12 months to March 2019, companies operating across these areas released 369 billion cubic feet (bcf) – roughly equivalent to the annual emissions of 10 coal-fired power stations – of natural gas into the atmosphere, either through flaring or venting (releasing the gas without burning).” [*NS Energy Business*, [10/24/19](#)]

Gas Now Emits More Greenhouse Gases Than Coal In The US And Europe. “Greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas use now exceed coal emissions in the United States and Europe. And while coal and oil still emit more globally, gas is now the primary driver of emissions growth worldwide.” [*E&E News*, [12/09/19](#)]

RHETORIC: API Supports Emissions Reductions In The Transportation Sector

API’s Plan Specifically Highlights Emissions Reductions In The Transportation Sector. “API supports technology-neutral policies at the federal level that drive GHG emissions reductions in the transportation sector, taking a holistic approach to fuels, vehicles, and infrastructure systems.” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

REALITY: API Has Praised Rollbacks To Transportation Fuel Standards

The Petroleum Industry Supported Trump’s Roll Back Of Mileage Standards For New Vehicles That Would Increase Transportation Emissions. “Not helping the transportation emissions situation is the Trump administration, which is trying to weaken mileage standards for new vehicles through model year 2026, a move backed by the petroleum industry but opposed by California and other left-leaning states.” [*Washington Post*, [01/30/20](#)]

On May 29, 2020, The EPA Proposed That No Additional Fuel Regulations Are Necessary To Mitigate Adverse Air Quality Impacts Of Required Renewable Fuel Volumes. “RFS regulations contained in the Clean Air Act require the EPA to complete an anti-backsliding study to determine if required RFS blending volumes adversely impact air quality as a result of changes in vehicle and engine emissions. After considering the results of the study, the agency is required to either promulgate fuel regulations to mitigate adverse impacts on air quality, or determine that no such measures are necessary. The EPA on May 29 issued a rulemaking proposing the second option—stating that the agency has determined no such measures are necessary.” [*Biomass Magazine*, [07/08/2020](#)]

- **American Petroleum Institute Commented In The Federal Register In Favor Of The EPA’s Proposed Determination for Renewable Fuels and Air Quality Pursuant to Clean Air Act Section 211 Anti-Backsliding Study.** [[Federal Register, 07/15/20](#); [Federal Register, 07/13/20](#); [Federal Register, 07/15/20](#)]

API Opposes Biden’s Plan To Reduce Carbon Emissions From The Transportation Sector As Recently As July 2020. “API also opposes a key piece of Biden’s plan to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector — a rebate for drivers who trade in traditional

internal-combustion vehicles powered by their products for electric ones.” [Washington Post, [07/16/20](#)]

API Push Internal Emissions Methodologies And ESG Reporting Despite A Self-Described “Lower Bar” And Years Of Violations From API Member Companies

RHETORIC: API Improved ESG Reporting And Improved Internal Emissions Methodologies For The Industry

API Supports Expanded Climate And ESG Reporting And Improving API’S Own Greenhouse Gas Emission Methodologies. “Drive Climate Reporting to provide consistency and transparency: Expand Use of ESG Reporting Guidance for the Natural Gas & Oil Industry: Report Comparable Climate-Related Indicators in New Template: Build on the API Compendium of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Methodologies for the Natural Gas and Oil Industry” [API, Climate Action Framework, accessed [03/30/21](#)]

REALITY: ESG Reporting Can Lead To Companies Looking Cleaner Without Helping The Environment...

ESG Investment Can Result In Polluting Business Going To Private Firms Where They Continue To Emit Greenhouse Gases. “In the race to go green, companies are doing the bidding of a growing class of powerful, socially conscious investors who are pouring trillions of dollars into businesses that can tout their environmental, social and good-governance bona fides. [...] But as the Engie-Riverstone deal illustrates, greening a corporate balance sheet isn’t the same as greening the planet. Regulators, investors and climate advocates are worried that utilities, oil producers and others, in their bid to meet investor and societal demands, are simply shifting plants, pipelines and other polluting assets to private firms that are less accountable.” [*Politico*, [03/30/21](#)]

- **Private Equity Information Released To Investors Is Subjective And Not Available To The Public.** “The information such funds release to their investors is subjective and not available to the general public, said Giachino, whose group is funded by foundations and labor rights groups.” [*Politico*, [03/30/21](#)]

...And API Has Been Suspicious Of Biden’s Proposals To Help Solve The Problems.

The Biden Administration Is Seeking To Address The Gap In Private Vs Public Disclosure Requirement. “Earlier this month, acting Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Allison Lee asked the public for ways to address “the significant gap” in disclosure requirements between public and private firms.” [*Politico*, [03/30/21](#)]

API Has Expressed Hesitancy Over Biden’s Proposed SEC Regulations. “The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Petroleum Institute, two of the biggest business associations, are

warning against a one-size-fits-all approach to the rules, which could expose companies to legal trouble if they don't accurately report information.” [Politico, [02/08/21](#)]

Emissions And Reducing

Emissions Reporting Is Not Currently Clearly Defined Across

Companies And Industries. “The process is complex and still largely unregulated and ill-defined. As a result, companies have a lot of discretion over how they report their emissions. For example, a multinational mining company might count emissions from extracting and processing ore but not the emissions produced by transporting it.” [KRQE, [03/28/21](#)]

API’s Environmental Partnership Reporting Does Not Require Emission Reduction

Targets From Participating Companies. “Environmental groups critical of the American Petroleum Institute’s effort, however, consider the reporting program weak because it does not require any overarching emissions reduction target of participating companies seeking to curb methane and flaring.” [Washington Examiner, [12/16/20](#)]

- **A Chevron Manager And Chairwoman Of The Environmental Partnership Even Described The Group As “Setting A Lower Bar.”** “Vanessa Ryan, manager of the carbon reduction team at Chevron and chairwoman of the Environmental Partnership, suggested that setting a lower bar for entry encourages more companies to participate.” [Washington Examiner, [12/16/20](#)]

Sommers Bragged That The Oil And Gas Industry Help “Pioneer Sustainability Reporting.” “Oil and gas companies were among the first businesses to pioneer sustainability reporting. This guidance helps provide detailed reporting on environmental, health, safety, social and economic performance – critical information that helps to foster collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders focused on creating a significant turning point in meeting the challenge of climate change head on.” [API, [03/30/20](#)]

An Analysis Of Environmental Violations Shows That Most Of The Companies With A Seat On API’s Board Of Directors Have Been Assessed Billions In Penalties For Environmental Violations. [Good Jobs First, accessed [03/01/21](#)]