

## **As The Biden Administration Takes Action To Lower Gas Prices For Americans, House Republicans Choose To Play Politics By Attacking Real Solutions While Big Oil Profits.**

**SUMMARY:** House Republicans plan to make restricting the president's ability to use the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) a top priority despite it being one of the only ways a president can impact prices.

The reserve was created to help Americans during disruptions just like the pandemic-related supply chain crises and the war in Ukraine that have blown up gas prices for the past two years. Meanwhile, Big Oil is bringing in record-breaking profits and their congressional cronies want to keep it that way.

The cynical and hypocritical attacks on the Biden administration's use of the SPR include:

**Forcing more onshore oil and gas production when the SPR is used** despite onshore oil production sitting at its highest levels in at least a decade, including the Trump years of so-called "energy independence." Adding superfluous requirements to SPR releases does nothing other than limit the president's ability to take action to help Americans when he needs to.

**Fear mongering about hypothetical national security threats from using the reserve and sending SPR releases to China** while backing the oil and gas industry's exporting of oil abroad. Even after the Biden administration's releases, the SPR is still well above levels that would threaten national security. What's more, House Republicans only seem to complain when the Biden administration is selling oil abroad. However, the same politicians are mum as Big Oil is set to make the US a net exporter of oil in 2023 as it continues to sell its products overseas.

## **House Republicans Make Cynical Attacks On The Biden Administration's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Releases, Opting Instead To Play Politics And Get Handouts For Big Oil While Americans Struggle At The Pump.**

### **RHETORIC: President Biden Shouldn't Use The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) To Help Lower Gas Prices.**

A "Top Energy Priority" For House Republicans In The 118th Congress Is Restricting Drawdowns Of The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). "House Republicans have made clear that one of their top energy priorities will be restricting drawdowns." [E&E News, [01/06/23](#)]

Rep Steve Scalise Described President Biden's SPR Releases As A "Raid." "'We wanted to start with some things on SPR, which we're seeing President Biden raid to cover for his failed policies,'" said Scalise when discussing his party's priorities." [E&E News, [01/06/23](#)]

### **REALITY: SPR Releases Are One Of The Only Ways For A President To Directly Influence The Price Of Gas.**

**“Tapping The Reserve Is Among The Few Things A President Can Do By Himself” To Lower Gas Prices.** “Tapping the reserve is among the few things a president can do by himself to try to control the inflation that makes Americans poorer and often creates a political liability for the party in control of the White House.” [E&E News, [12/19/22](#)]

**Oil Prices Have “Fallen Sharply” From 2022 Peaks As The Biden Administration Sold Oil From The SPR.** “Having released 160 million barrels of crude since March, more than a quarter of the stockpile, the Energy Department has reduced the reserve to its lowest level in four decades. [...] But even though oil prices have fallen sharply from their peak, the administration is not ready to start refilling the reserve. [...] Tapping the reserve this year was intended to compensate for a shortfall of supplies resulting from Western sanctions on Russia, a major oil and gas exporter. Some experts predicted that oil prices would rise well above \$150 a barrel. But while prices did spike immediately after the invasion in February, the American benchmark, West Texas intermediate, has eased to about \$82 a barrel.” [New York Times, [09/29/22](#)]

**REALITY: This Is What The SPR Was Designed To Do - Provide Relief When Unprecedented Events Like The War In Ukraine Contribute To Sky-High Gas Prices.**

**The SPR Was Created To “Reduce The Impact Of Disruptions” For Oil And Gas.** “Inspired by the oil embargo of 1973-1974, Congress created the reserve in 1975. Directed by law to “reduce the impact of disruptions in supplies of petroleum products,” the government sold fuel from the reserve on only three occasions before last year.” [E&E News, [01/06/23](#)]

**The Biden Administration Began Draw Downs In Response To Pandemic-Related Supply Chain Problems And The Russian Invasion Of Ukraine.** “Biden’s drawdowns followed pandemic-related supply chain constraints, production cuts from rival nations and the war in Ukraine.” [E&E News, [01/06/23](#)]

**REALITY: More Oil Production Would Take Years To Come Online And Impact Gas Prices, But The SPR Allows Relief From High Prices To Consumers Now.**

**Releases From The SPR Allows Immediate Action On Gas Prices.** ““The bottom line is if we want lower gas prices, we need to have more oil supply now,” Mr. Biden said when announcing the release policy in March.” [New York Times, [09/29/22](#)]

**RHETORIC: Releases From The SPR Should Be Paired With More Drilling On Federal Lands.**

**House Bill HR 21 Would Require Increased Federal Oil And Gas Drilling Alongside Releases From The SPR.** “To provide for the development of a plan to increase oil and gas production under oil and gas leases of Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Defense in conjunction with a drawdown of petroleum reserves from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.” [E&E News, HR 21, [12/21/22](#)]

**REALITY: Federal Onshore Oil Production Is Already The Highest Its Been In A Decade - Including All Four Years Of The Trump Administration.**

In What Is Currently Reported For The 2022 Fiscal Year, The US Produced More Oil From Federal Onshore Sites Than Any Time In The Past Decade. [Natural Resources Revenue Data, accessed [01/09/22](#)]

The US Federal Onshore Oil Production Is Currently Higher Than All Four Years Of The Trump Presidency.

Administration	Fiscal Year	Oil Produced (bbl)
Trump	2017	177,158,209
	2018	224,194,301
	2019	289,654,710
	2020	317,894,755
Biden	2021	379,592,091
	2022 (Oct-Aug)	395,855,428

Source: Natural Resources Revenue Data, accessed [01/09/22](#)

**REALITY: The Biden Administration Already Announced Plans To Refill The Reserve.**

December 2022: The Biden Administration Announces Plans To Begin Refilling The Strategic Petroleum Reserve. "The Biden administration said Friday it is buying 3 million barrels of oil to begin to replenish U.S. strategic reserves that officials drained earlier this year in a bid to stop gasoline prices from rising amid production cuts by OPEC and a ban on Russian oil imports." [E&E News, [12/19/22](#)]

**REALITY: The Biden Administration Is Pushing Back On Congressionally Mandated SPR Releases From 2024-2027.**

The Biden Administration Is Trying To Stop Congressional Mandated SPR Sales In Order To Refill The Reserve. "The Biden administration is seeking to stop sales from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve mandated by Congress so it can refill the emergency reserve, a move that could impact the release of 147 million barrels of crude oil. The Energy Department is seeking to cancel or delay sales mandated by Congress in fiscal years 2024 through 2027 so that it can move forward with a White House plan to refill the oil reserve when crude prices reach around \$70 a barrel, an agency official told a Senate committee Thursday." [Bloomberg, [12/01/22](#)]

**House Republicans Pretend To Care About High Gas Prices And National Security By Spending Their Time Fear Mongering While Big Oil Profits By Exporting Overseas.**

## **RHETORIC: A Low Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Is A National Security Threat.**

**Republicans Claim Lowering The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Threatens The US's National Security.** "Still, Republicans argue that their plan this year for the nation's crude deposits goes beyond politics. They worry the nation would be unable to protect its citizens in the event of an emergency, like a natural disaster or during a national security threat." [E&E News, [01/06/23](#)]

**Rep Garret Graves Claimed The Biden Administration's Use Of The SPR Weakened "Energy Security."** "The Biden Administration can't continue to tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and simultaneously say we don't have an energy crisis or a need to increase domestic energy production. Their self-imposed mistakes are weakening our energy security." [Twitter, @RepGarretGraves, [09/28/22](#)]

## **REALITY: The SPR Is Still Well Above Levels That Would Threaten National Security.**

**The SPR Is Still "Well-Positioned TO Weather Potential Supply Shocks."** "But the administration appears to be in no rush. It has said it believes the SPR's remaining holdings – about 382 million barrels – leave it well-positioned to weather potential supply shocks. The SPR held about 593 million barrels of oil at the beginning of this year, according to the Energy Department, down from a peak of 727 million barrels in 2009." [Wall Street Journal, [12/19/22](#)]

**The SPR Is Still Well Above Levels In Which Draw Downs Would Become A Concern.** "Yet the stockpile may not be a security problem without a much steeper drop. "Somewhere below 165 million barrels storage is when the drawdown capacity becomes extremely limited," the Wood Mackenzie team said in an email. "As the storage is drawn down, the rate of release slows."" [E&E News, [10/24/22](#)]

## **RHETORIC: Releases From The SPR Are Sending US Oil To China And That Must Stop.**

**House Republicans Introduced A Bill To Block SPR Releases From Being Sold To China.** "To prohibit the Secretary of Energy from sending petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to China, and for other purposes." [Republican Whip, Protecting America's SPR From China Act, 12/21/22, archived [01/02/23](#)]

## **REALITY: Republicans Have No Problem When Big Oil Profits By Sending Oil And Gas Abroad.**

**House Republicans Decried A Potential Ban On US Oil Exports As A Response To High Gas Prices.** "House Republicans were alarmed after a Biden administration official floated a ban on crude oil exports. Reps. Roger Williams and August Pfluger of Texas led a letter with 61 of their House GOP colleagues to Secretaries Jennifer Granholm and Gina Raimondo. "President Biden's

war on American energy continues with his Administration's latest discussions to reinstate the export ban on crude oil, which was repealed in 2015 on a bipartisan vote," Williams said in his official statement." [Fox, [12/03/21](#)]

### **REALITY: The US Is Already The Largest Exporter Of Gas In The World And Is Set To Be A Net Exporter Of Oil In 2023.**

**The US Is The Largest Exporter Of Liquefied Natural Gas.** "The United States became the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas during the first half of 2022, surpassing Qatar and Australia, on the back of demand from Europe and surging prices. LNG exports likely will continue to rise into 2023 as Europe scrambles to refill storage depleted this winter, said Matt Smith, analyst at Kpler." [Reuters, [12/19/22](#)]

**The US Is Poised To Become A Net Exporter Of Oil In 2023.** "The United States has become a global crude oil exporting power over the last few years, but exports have not exceeded its imports since World War II. That could change next year. Sales of U.S. crude to other nations are now a record 3.4 million barrels per day (bpd), with exports of about 3 million bpd of refined products like gasoline and diesel fuel." [Reuters, [12/19/22](#)]

*The US Is The Largest Oil Producer In The World.*

**The US Produces More Oil Than Any Other Country In The World.** "The United States already produces more oil than any other country in the world including Saudi Arabia and Russia." [Reuters, [12/19/22](#)]

### **REALITY: Big Oil Doesn't Want The SPR Refilled Because The Government Would Be Buying Oil When Prices Are Low.**

**Chevron CEO Mike Wirth Criticized The Biden Administration's Plan To Refill The SPR As "Not Necessarily A Wise Move."** "Separately, Chevron Corp. Chief Executive Officer Mike Wirth said Thursday the Biden administration's plan to refill the SPR at those levels is "not necessarily a wise move."" [Bloomberg, [12/01/22](#)]

**The Biden Administration Plans To Repurchase Oil For The Reserve When Prices Are In The \$70s, Down From Highs Above \$100 In 2022.** "The purchase, to begin in January, will start to replenish the reserve and is likely to be followed by additional purchases, officials said. The Energy Department called the purchase "a good deal for American taxpayers" since the price will be lower than the \$96 per barrel average the U.S. oil was sold for. The replenishment also will strengthen U.S. energy security, the department said in a statement. The purchase price was not announced, but benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude oil was selling at \$74.50 per barrel late Friday." [E&E News, [12/19/22](#)]