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**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

CHAIR, INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WEAPONIZATION  
OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 22, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

On April 19, 2023, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing focused on “Examining the President’s FY 2024 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior,” in which you participated and offered your testimony on the Administration’s priorities. During this time, I asked you whether there have been any approvals for thermal or metallurgical coal leases or lease modifications under your leadership. You stated that you were working on the issue and that you would be happy to get back to me on the number of permits issued.<sup>1</sup> I am writing you today to follow up on this important question.

Wyoming is one of the top energy producing states in the nation, related in large part to our production of coal.<sup>2</sup> Our mineral-rich landscape and resources have blessed us economically for well over a century. The economic benefits associated with production and use of our energy resources does not just provide for good-paying jobs, a high standard of living, and prosperous communities, they also support our schools and our other government services. More than 40% of the coal produced in this country comes from Wyoming. As such, I am deeply troubled by this Administration’s actions to decrease, slow down, block and prevent coal production in my state. Your refusal to process and approve pending coal lease applications has demonstrated to Wyoming – and the country as a whole -- that your politics and agenda is one of furthering energy poverty, restricting access to affordable and clean energy, and ultimately a dramatically scaled back standard of living for everyone except the elites who can afford skyrocketing energy prices.

It was also troublesome to me that you were unable to answer my very simple and straightforward question as to whether coal provides affordable energy. We both know that it does, and that it can continue to do so into the long distant future. You responded, however, by claiming that using different energy sources around the country will help keep energy more affordable. I am not sure that you can prove your claim with actual data, as wind and solar energy sources continue to receive substantial subsidies, tax credits, and other types of government financial support.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Examining the President’s FY 2024 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior, House Natural Resources Committee, April 19, 2023, <https://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=413024>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, May 18, 2023, <https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WY>

<sup>3</sup> Renewable energy explained - incentives - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/renewable-sources/incentives.php>

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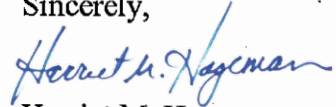
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In short, our conversation did not convince me that President Biden and the Department of Interior care about coal communities or the continued production of affordable and clean energy for the benefit of the American people. I am convinced now more than ever that it is the priority of this Administration to ensure that energy costs continue to increase -- along with the cost of everything else -- and that forcing energy poverty is intentional.

I ask that you please respond to the question, "have there been any approvals for thermal or met coal leases or lease modifications under your leadership?" In your response, I specifically request that you include the actual number of coal leases or lease modifications approved under your leadership. I also ask that you respond in a timely manner. There is no shortage of pending projects in Wyoming, and if you really feel grateful for what the coal industry has done to keep the lights on and heaters burning, you can let them know what you're currently doing to issue these permits.

Sincerely,



Harriet M. Hageman  
Member of Congress