

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0309

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Joe Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to develop and implement a new Five-Year Program for oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico without delay.

Americans are facing record-level gasoline prices every day when they commute to work, drive their children to school, and buy groceries and medicine. The additional disruptions in the oil market caused by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine could drive prices up even further. We support your decision to coordinate a release of crude oil from the emergency reserves of International Energy Agency members but believe more must be done to provide relief to Americans facing rising costs for everything from gas to groceries. Increasing domestic oil production to meet demand is a critical step to lowering gas prices and reducing our reliance on foreign sources.

A new Five-Year Program is needed to establish a schedule for oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico off the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and west Florida. The program should be flexible for responding to high gasoline prices now and in the future and enable the United States to become more energy independent to meet emerging geopolitical threats. This plan should also provide for the protection of marine life and the environment, and ensure drilling operations are conducted safely and responsibly. In the meantime, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the National Marine Fisheries Service must continue timely processing of permits and plans for existing leases. Delays to seismic permitting present a serious risk to bringing additional offshore production online in the near term while the Five-Year Program is being developed.

Advancing Gulf production does not mean our nation must abandon its climate goals. The Gulf of Mexico is among the lowest greenhouse gas-emission-intensity oil production sites in the world and would offset foreign imports that are shipped across oceans. When the Obama administration created the current 2017-2022 Program, they found that GHG emissions "could, in fact, increase slightly in the absence of new OCS leasing." Allowing energy projects to languish in court or remain suspended in years of bureaucratic limbo is not addressing the pain at the pump or the climate crisis. The United States can and should increase its renewable energy production and lower its greenhouse gas emissions, but this must

occur responsibly, pragmatically, and through an all-of-the-above energy approach that takes advantage of our resources at home.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Kelly in black ink.

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Joe Manchin in black ink.

Joe Manchin
United States Senator