

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

February 24, 2021

Re. Limiting American Energy Production and Capabilities Is Detrimental to U.S. National Security

Secretary Austin:

Congratulations on your selection as our nation's Secretary of Defense. You've already set a blistering pace reaffirming America's role in global stability. Well done and thank you for your steadfast leadership over many decades and in the years to come.

We are writing to encourage you to leverage our nation's abundant natural resources, including domestic oil and gas production and energy exports, to reassert the United States' leadership on the global stage, strengthen our military capabilities, and further reduce our dependence on foreign suppliers and vulnerable global supply chains.

The current administration has declared climate change an existential threat to national security. However, policies that limit American energy production and capabilities, such as blocking the construction of new energy infrastructure, shuttering existing infrastructure, and banning oil and natural gas development on federal lands are equally a threat to national security and military readiness. Meeting our challenges tomorrow will be impossible if we forfeit America's energy advantages today.

The mission, to "provide for the common defense," has guided America's policy towards energy independence since President Carter's administration. In 2019, the United States became a [net-energy exporter](#) for the first time in nearly 70 years, owing to our remarkable shale renaissance and robust infrastructure network that enables the safe and efficient movement of American oil and gas from production sites to consumer markets. The benefit is obvious. Meeting energy needs at home helps offset mounting threats from China, Russia, and other maligned nations while strengthening our international partnerships.

Our military, and the militaries of our partners, rely on traditional energy products. Tanks and warplanes run on petroleum. Vehicles and body armor are built from carbon fiber. Micro-chip technology is made with oil and gas byproducts. If it were a country, the U.S. military would rank as the [47th](#) largest consumer of fossil fuels in the world, consuming approximately 270,000 barrels of oil each day. The U.S. military is dependent on fossil fuels and the transition to alternative fuels - an essential, strategic initiative - cannot offset that reality in the near term. While our military steadily makes this transition, and, for example, leads the commercial market in lithium ion battery research and development, banning natural gas and oil leases on federal lands and dismantling our nation's pipeline network will only risk our military capabilities and readiness, now and in the immediate future.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued selfless service to our great nation.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Dail
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Retired)

David A. Deptula
Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Benjamin C. Freakley
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Francis H. Kearney
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Robert S. Walsh
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)

Julius S. Caesar
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Clarence K.K. Chinn
Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Robert F. Dees
Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

James A. Marks
Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Mastin M. Robeson
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)

Anthony J. Tata
Brigadier General, U.S. Army (Retired)