

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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July 26, 2021

Mr. Keith McCoy
Senior Director, Federal Relations
ExxonMobil Corporation
1177 22nd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. McCoy:

We are writing to request your appearance at a transcribed interview regarding efforts by ExxonMobil and other fossil fuel companies to mislead the global public and Members of Congress about the dangers of fossil fuels and their role in causing global climate change.

ExxonMobil has had scientific evidence about the danger posed by climate change since at least 1981.¹ Yet for decades, the fossil fuel industry and its allies have used the same tactics as the tobacco industry to spread denial and doubt about the harm of its products—undermining the science and preventing serious action on climate change.² ExxonMobil has played a large role in these decades of climate disinformation.³

Meanwhile, the United States saw an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, including from the energy sector, between 1990 and 2019. Carbon pollution emissions from fossil fuel combustion accounted for over 92% of carbon dioxide emissions in 2019 and were responsible for most of the increase in emissions from 2009 to 2019 in the United States. The United States has experienced 19 of the warmest years on record since 2000.⁴

¹ *How the Oil Industry Made Us Doubt Climate Change*, BBC News (Sept. 20, 2020) (online at www.bbc.com/news/stories-53640382).

² *Big Oil Is the New Big Tobacco. Congress Must Use Its Power to Investigate*, The Guardian (Jan. 20, 2020) (online at www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/20/big-oil-congress-climate-change); *Doubt over Climate Science Is a Product with an Industry Behind It*, The Guardian (March 5, 2015) (online at www.theguardian.com/environment/planet-oz/2015/mar/05/doubt-over-climate-science-is-a-product-with-an-industry-behind-it).

³ *Exxon Has Misled Americans on Climate Change for Decades. Here's How to Fight Back*, The Guardian (Oct. 23, 2019) (online at www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/23/exxon-climate-change-fossil-fuels-disinformation).

⁴ National Aeronautics and Space Administration, *Global Temperature* (online at <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature/>) (accessed July 20, 2021); Environmental Protection Agency, *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2019* (2021) (EPA 430-R-21-005) (online at www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/documents/us-ghg-inventory-2021-main-text.pdf).

You have been a senior lobbyist for ExxonMobil since 2014 and continue to be employed at the company. You were recently recorded during a video interview with a reporter at Greenpeace UK, which was aired by Channel 4 News in the United Kingdom on June 30, 2021. During the interview, you said, “Did we aggressively fight against some of the science? Yes.” You added, “Did we join some of these shadow groups to work against some of the early efforts? Yes, that’s true.” In the same video, you spoke candidly about ExxonMobil’s current public support for a price on carbon as a mere publicity stunt. You asserted that the company does not actually believe such a policy will ever exist. Your statements suggest that in supporting this policy, ExxonMobil is seeking to create the false appearance that it has become more climate friendly.⁵

In a second report on July 1, 2021, Channel 4 News broadcast additional segments from the video interview.⁶ During one portion of the interview, you stated that ExxonMobil manufactures per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), dangerous “forever chemicals” that can cause serious health problems and persist in the environment.⁷ You also compared ExxonMobil’s approach to lobbying Members of Congress to fishing. You stated, “I liken it to fishing, right? You know you have bait, you throw that bait out.”⁸ As an example of “fishing” for Members of Congress, you detailed ExxonMobil’s lobbying efforts to include natural gas as a clean energy source in the event Congress adopts a Clean Energy Standard, despite clear scientific evidence to the contrary.⁹ You also described how you “reel” in Members of Congress on various policy issues, including a price on carbon, sanctions on Russia, and regulating plastics manufacturing.¹⁰

Your statements raise serious concerns about your role in ongoing efforts by ExxonMobil and the fossil fuel industry to spread climate disinformation, including through the use of “shadow groups,” in order to block action needed to address climate change. Your statements also raise questions about ExxonMobil’s operations and the dangerous emissions and pollution the company generates. As you know, combating the increasingly urgent crisis of climate change, addressing the pollution caused by the fossil fuel industry, and curbing troubling

⁵ *Revealed: ExxonMobil’s Lobbying War on Climate Change Legislation*, Channel 4 News (June 30, 2021) (online at www.channel4.com/news/revealed-exxonmobils-lobbying-war-on-climate-change-legislation).

⁶ *ExxonMobil Lobbyist Reveals Company’s Involvement with “Forever Chemicals”*, Channel 4 News (July 1, 2021) (online at www.channel4.com/news/exxonmobil-lobbyist-reveals-companys-involvement-with-forever-chemicals).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Revealed: ExxonMobil’s Lobbying War on Climate Change Legislation*, Channel 4 News (June 30, 2021) (online at www.channel4.com/news/revealed-exxonmobils-lobbying-war-on-climate-change-legislation).

⁹ *ExxonMobil Lobbyist Reveals Company’s Involvement with “Forever Chemicals”*, Channel 4 News (July 1, 2021) (online at www.channel4.com/news/exxonmobil-lobbyist-reveals-companys-involvement-with-forever-chemicals); e.g., *Explainer: Cleaner but Not Clean—Why Scientists Say Natural Gas Won’t Avert Climate Disaster*, Reuters (Aug. 18, 2020) (online at www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-gas-climatebox-explainer/explainer-cleaner-but-not-clean-why-scientists-say-natural-gas-wont-avert-climate-disaster-idUSKCN25E1DR).

¹⁰ *ExxonMobil Lobbyist Reveals Company’s Involvement with “Forever Chemicals”*, Channel 4 News (July 1, 2021) (online at www.channel4.com/news/exxonmobil-lobbyist-reveals-companys-involvement-with-forever-chemicals).

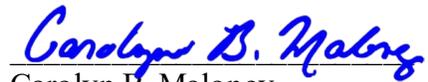
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business practices that lead to disinformation on these issues are top legislative priorities for this Congress.

In order to assist the Committee with its investigation, we request your participation in a transcribed interview on Monday, August 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. ET. Please respond by July 30, 2021, to confirm your voluntary participation in the interview.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Ro Khanna
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Ralph Norman, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment