March 31, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

Thank you for your leadership during this difficult time. As we consider efforts to reboot our economy, we ask for your support in providing relief, utilizing our existing authority, to stabilize industries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. America’s energy producers face unprecedented challenges, putting hundreds of thousands of jobs, inflation and affordable energy security at risk.

Congress is considering a wide array of efforts to ensure the economy can continue to function. The Department of the Interior will strongly consider similar efforts to ensure our industry operating within the federal onshore/onlaee (onshore and offshore) sectors.

With this in mind, we encourage you to reduce, delay, or extend the financial emergency payments for onshore, and offshore, oil and gas, and related to the U.S. Treasury. We also ask that you immediately suspend onshore and offshore production requirements, where appropriate, to help gain support for energy issues throughout this time. To the extent possible, we ask that you preserve or return as much of revenues collected.

As Secretary, you have several authorities that allow you to reduce or suspend emergency payments.

With economic conditions improving over time, providing this necessary relief now will ensure America continues production, essential industry jobs are preserved, and taxpayers receive a fair return from federal lands and the leases.

These emergency measures are needed to continue production rather than a bailout and should be given due consideration on this issue. I have no playbook for this situation we find ourselves in and we must utilize every existing authority to enable them to come out on the other side of this incredibly tough time.

Given these considerations, we urge you to provide necessary relief in the form of a suspension or reduction in federal royalties paid to the U.S. Treasury, particularly for small and midsized producers. Without these measures, it is likely that many companies will cease production, which could cost thousands of jobs and threaten American energy security. These measures of relief will allow a stronger domestic energy industry to emerge and will help maintain America’s role as a global energy leader.

Sincerely,

John Barrasso, M.D.
U.S. Senator

John Cornyn
U.S. Senator

Michael B. Enzi
U.S. Senator

Steve Daines
U.S. Senator

John Kennedy
U.S. Senator

James M. Inhofe
U.S. Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator

Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator

Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator

John Hoeven
U.S. Senator