

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641  
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September 10, 2024

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Rodgers:

I write to follow up on my May 28, 2024, letter requesting that the Committee hold a hearing on the disturbing allegations of Big Oil colluding to drive up gas prices at the pump for hardworking Americans. Specifically, I requested that you schedule a hearing with Scott Sheffield, the former CEO of Pioneer Natural Resources (Pioneer), given the allegations that emerged from the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) review of the proposed merger of Exxon Mobil Corporation (Exxon) and Pioneer.<sup>1,2</sup> As I wrote to you in May, "[t]he Energy and Commerce Committee has an obligation to the American people to ensure that oil companies are obeying the law."<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, I have not received a response to the letter, and you have taken no action to schedule a hearing with Mr. Sheffield.

This is especially concerning given the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee is scheduled to have a hearing on energy prices this week, yet you have taken no action to follow up on the FTC's allegations.<sup>4</sup> The FTC complaint details numerous serious allegations against Mr. Sheffield, including colluding with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and OPEC+ to artificially limit crude oil production and thereby gouge Americans at the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, to Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce (May 28, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> Federal Trade Commission, *FTC Order Bans Former Pioneer CEO from Exxon Board Seat in Exxon-Pioneer Deal*, (May 2, 2024) (press release).

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.

<sup>4</sup> House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security, *Hearing on From Gas to Groceries: Americans Pay the Price of the Biden-Harris Energy Agenda*, 118th Cong. (Sept. 11, 2024).

pump.<sup>5</sup> If true, these allegations would constitute a stunning violation of U.S. antitrust law and a troubling disruption of the global energy market. Further, these allegations suggest Mr. Sheffield lied to the Committee under oath at a 2022 hearing.<sup>6</sup> Any examination of energy prices would be incomplete without inquiring about the impact of potential collusion among crude oil producers, OPEC, and OPEC+.

Despite the extremely troubling allegations included in the FTC's review, press reports say several Committee Republicans were "totally unfamiliar with the findings."<sup>7</sup> You were quoted as saying that you would have to "take a look" at the report.<sup>8</sup> In order to facilitate the Committee's understanding of the allegations contained in the FTC report, I request that you ask the FTC to provide a bipartisan briefing for Members and Committee staff as soon as possible, so that we may gain a better understanding of the evidence leading to the FTC's allegations in the redacted complaint. Such a briefing request from you, as Committee Chair, would allow the FTC to share additional, non-public information with Members and staff, providing us with a complete picture of the evidence against Mr. Sheffield.

I have already opened an investigation into potential collusion by American oil companies, but this matter requires bipartisan attention and action by the Committee.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Federal Trade Commission, *In the Matter of Exxon Mobil Corporation, Complaint* ([https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc\\_gov/pdf/2410004exxonpioneercomplaintredacted.pdf](https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/ftc_gov/pdf/2410004exxonpioneercomplaintredacted.pdf)) (accessed Sept. 6, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> House Committee on Energy and Commerce, *Hearing on Gouged at the Gas Station: Big Oil and America's Pain at the Pump*, 117th Cong. (Apr. 6, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> *The Democrats' Plan to Turn the Tables on Gasoline Prices*, E&E Daily (June 11, 2024) (<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2024/06/11/the-democrats-plan-to-turn-the-tables-on-gasoline-prices-00162559>).

<sup>8</sup> See note 7.

<sup>9</sup> House Committee on Energy and Commerce, *E&C Democrats Launch Investigation into Reports of Oil Companies Colluding to Drive up Gas Prices*, (May 22, 2024) (press release).

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers

September 10, 2024

Page 3

I am hopeful that a briefing would help Committee Republicans understand the gravity of these allegations and the need for a hearing to get answers. Therefore, I urge you to join us in conducting constructive oversight of possible Big Oil collusion by requesting a briefing with the FTC, and as requested in my previous letter, an oversight hearing on these stunning allegations of very real harms to energy prices rather than holding a messaging hearing on baseless partisan Republican talking points. We must hold Big Oil accountable if they are illegally driving up prices at the gas pump on American families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member