

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to you to express our strong opposition against the actions you have taken related to our nation's energy infrastructure and national security. In your first 100 days in office, you have cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline, our country has experienced one of the worst gasoline shortages since the 1970s, and you waived the application of congressionally mandated sanctions paving the way for Russia to complete the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. We are concerned that the culmination of these actions, if not reversed, will not only hamper our economic recovery with high gasoline prices, but will also weaken the United States on the global stage and embolden our adversaries. We therefore respectfully request you change course and take the immediate actions outlined below to lower prices for American families and put our nation back on the path to energy independence.

The average cost of unleaded gasoline has increased 41% since your election.<sup>1</sup> If we are to overcome the economic consequences of the pandemic, it is imperative that necessities such as fuel take as little out of family budgets as possible so that Americans can return to work, plan summer vacations, and resume the historic economic progress that was underway before the pandemic struck. Higher energy costs disproportionately affect low- and fixed-income households who spend a greater share of their income to heat their homes and fuel their cars. In your inaugural address, you promised the American people that you would “put people to work in good jobs,” and “rebuild the middle class.”<sup>2</sup> These are admirable goals we also share. However, cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline – a project that would have put 11,000 Americans in good, high-paying jobs and helped reduce the cost of fuel for American families – works directly against achieving these goals. We urge you to reconsider and allow the project to resume construction.

A little more than three months after cancellation of the Keystone XL pipeline, our nation was the victim of one of the most significant cyberattacks against our critical infrastructure to date when the Colonial Pipeline was attacked with ransomware. Although we commend you for the waivers that the Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency issued to combat resulting gasoline shortages, the images of countless gas stations across the Southeast with signs saying “No gas, we’re out,” were stark reminder that our country needs more

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gasprices.aaa.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/01/20/inaugural-address-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr/>

pipelines, not fewer. Development of additional pipelines to the United States, such as Keystone XL, will ensure our nation's resiliency and energy security. Moreover, as Secretary of Energy Granholm acknowledged as the attack on Colonial was still on going, pipelines remain the safest and most environmentally-responsible way to transport oil, natural gas, and refined fuels.<sup>3</sup> One lesson from the Colonial Pipeline is clear – we must continue to invest and expand our nation's pipeline system.

Another glaring lesson from the cyberattack on the Colonial Pipeline is that the United States and all nations must hold accountable cyber attackers and the countries who knowingly host them. There must be zero tolerance for these attacks on American critical infrastructure. We urge you to use your authority under Executive Orders 13694<sup>4</sup> and 13873<sup>5</sup> to make the actors responsible in the Colonial Pipeline attack pay a steep price and send a signal to the rest of the world that the United States will not tolerate direct and deliberate threats to our national security.

Finally, only one week after the attack on the Colonial Pipeline, you decided to ignore congressional will and waived the application of mandatory US sanctions against the company behind the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, Nord Stream 2 AG – a move that will only embolden Vladimir Putin and his allies. Allowing completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline enables Putin to tighten his grip on Europe's natural gas supplies and directly undercuts efforts to counter Russian aggression in the region. Americans also must wonder why the Administration favors Russian pipelines and its workers over American pipelines and its workers. We strongly urge you to follow US law and congressional intent by sanctioning Nord Stream 2 AG as well as all individuals and entities involved in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Left uncorrected, any one of these actions in isolation harms American families, hampers our economic recovery, and degrades our national security. Taken together, they represent a fundamental threat to America's long-term economic and national security. We urge you to do the right thing and take immediate actions to put America back on a path of energy independence and economic prosperity. We stand ready to assist you with these challenges.

Sincerely,



Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/01/20/inaugural-address-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr/> ;  
<https://empower.afpm.org/safety/are-pipelines-safe#:~:text=US%20Department%20of%20Transportation%20data,safely%20through%20interstate%20transmission%20pipelines>

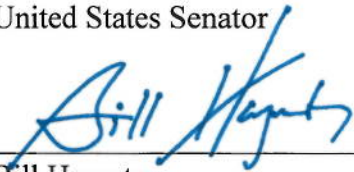
<sup>4</sup> <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/01/executive-order-blocking-property-certain-persons-engaging-significant-m>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/05/17/2019-10538/securing-the-information-and-communications-technology-and-services-supply-chain>



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John Thune  
United States Senator



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Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



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Rick Scott  
United States Senator



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Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



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John Hoeven  
United States Senator



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Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator



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Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



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Steve Daines  
United States Senator



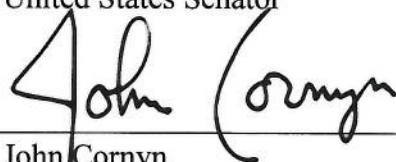
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Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator



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Cindy Hyde-Smith  
United States Senator



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John Cornyn  
United States Senator