



National Association of Hispanic Publications Media  
529 14<sup>th</sup> St NW, Suite 923  
Washington, DC 20045

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Department of Interior's interim report on Interior's federal leasing program and weigh in during the comment period. My organization, the National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP) Media, is a non-partisan trade advocacy organization representing the leading Spanish language publications serving 41 markets in 39 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, with a combined circulation of over 23 million. Our organization's network of Spanish language news publications spans the country, with a concentration in areas of large Hispanic populations including New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Coverage on climate change and energy is an area of significant attention among our readership, and one where our publishers have demonstrated a growing editorial interest. In addition, our readers are both major consumers and workers in the energy and electricity sectors. I wish to weigh in on Department of Interior's federal leasing program in light of this perspective.

I want to applaud the Biden administration for your commitment to combating climate change and setting forth bold environmental goals. However, I would be remiss if I did not highlight how federal leasing actually is beneficial to the environment in several ways. As a result of the United States moving away from coal, our country has made the most progress of any major economy in reducing its carbon footprint, according to the United Nations [Emissions Gap Report 2020](#).

Much of our country's progress due to the result of cleaner burning natural gas for use in electricity generation, which resulted in [57% more emissions reductions](#) versus renewables from 2005-2018. President Biden's federal leasing ban could reverse decades of environmental progress as national CO2 emissions in the power sector could increase by an average of 5.5% by 2030 if such a policy goes into effect.

Another concern of mine is the impact the federal leasing ban will have on tax revenue for public education in states like New Mexico, which has a significant Hispanic population. The oil and gas industry has provided New Mexico [\\$1.37 billion](#) dollars for public education, accounting for over one third of their education budget. If this revenue is lost, it will have devastating effects on the students, teachers, curriculums, and Hispanic communities around the state. It is not clear how this revenue could be recovered, other than heavily taxing residents, which would not be a welcome solution.

While I appreciate the Biden administration's dedication to confronting our country's climate challenges, I believe a federal leasing ban is not the way to accomplish these goals, and thus should be reconsidered.

Sincerely,

*Ricardo Hurtado*

Ricardo Hurtado  
Chair, National Association of Hispanic Publications Media