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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

Minority (202) 225-2927

April 3, 2024

Dr. Fatih Birol  
Executive Director  
International Energy Agency  
9 Rue de la Fédération  
75739 Paris Cedex 15  
France

Dear Dr. Birol:

We write to request information concerning the management and operations of the International Energy Agency (IEA). As the principal standing committee in the U.S. House of Representatives exercising jurisdiction over energy policy, energy information, and the management of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), we are conducting oversight of the IEA. As you know, the DOE oversees governance of the IEA and participates in various committees that guide IEA's policy and programs. A representative from the DOE serves as vice chair of the IEA's Governing Board, which is responsible for overall management of the IEA through its budget and work plan. Furthermore, a significant share of the IEA's overall budget is funded by U.S. taxpayers.

The IEA was established in 1974 to ensure the security of oil supplies following the disruptions created by the Arab oil embargo. Congress has authorized U.S. government agencies to participate in the IEA to provide authoritative data and impartial analysis of world energy markets, to help coordinate responses to energy supply disruptions, and to strengthen the energy security of the U.S. and its allies. We are concerned that the IEA has lost focus of its energy security mission and has instead shifted attention and resources to climate policy advocacy—to the detriment of its core mission.

Under your leadership, the IEA ceased publishing baseline oil and natural gas demand forecasts that accurately project market conditions and account for current laws and regulations. Such business-as-usual, or reference, forecasts are essential for objective analysis. The forecasts provide a vital tool for policy makers to assess current energy security needs and the costs and benefits of new policies. Instead, the IEA discarded these objective forecasts and began modeling only to the aspirational goals of climate policies that limit the use of fossil fuels. As a result, the

IEA's projections show fossil energy demand will soon peak, in keeping with those climate policy scenarios.

The energy crisis following the COVID pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 exposed Europe's dangerous dependence on Russian natural gas and the world's reliance on Chinese supply chains for so-called "clean" energy technologies, including wind, solar, and batteries. Fuel shortages and high energy prices destabilized economies around the globe. European countries, whose gas supply remains dependent on Russian pipelines and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, are being forced to ration supplies and curtail manufacturing.

The IEA's new climate agenda and flawed projections may have contributed to the ongoing energy crisis by failing to provide participating governments with accurate and impartial data to make decisions. Government decisionmakers and energy sector users of the IEA's reports have been unable to weigh the cost and benefits of policy and investment decisions when IEA's fictional scenarios skew demand forecasts.

The IEA's questionable projections of "peak" demand of oil and natural gas already threaten to undermine the energy security of the United States and its allies. For example, the DOE recently testified that the IEA reference scenario showing global demand for natural gas will peak this decade informed the Biden administration's decision to halt consideration of new U.S. LNG export permits.<sup>1</sup>

Restrictions on U.S. LNG exports will have a significant impact on domestic economies and fuel prices, energy security, and global emissions. Notably, U.S. LNG exports have spurred European countries to construct LNG import facilities in order to further wean themselves off of Russian natural gas. Regrettably, Europe imported a record amount of LNG from Russia last year, despite these efforts. Europe is importing 40 percent more LNG from Russia today than it was before the invasion of Ukraine. Now is not the time to turn away from America's tremendous energy potential.

The IEA's embrace of climate policy advocacy raises serious questions about the IEA's performance and its dedication to the energy security mission authorized by Congress and funded by U.S. taxpayers. To assist the Committee in its review of IEA's management and operations, we ask that you respond to the following by April 17, 2024:

1. Please provide a description of the total annual budget and personnel, including contractors, of the IEA.
  - a. Please list the location(s) of all offices where the IEA maintains a physical presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of David Turk, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy, before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, February 8, 2024. Available here: <https://www.energy.senate.gov/services/files/12C4B00D-BFF3-4D11-9CD7-E462B156BF61>

- b. Has the IEA considered moving the location of its headquarters in Paris, France, on a permanent or rotational basis?
2. Please list all funding, personnel, technical assistance, and other resources provided by the U.S. Government to the IEA since January 20, 2021.
3. Please provide all records, including communications, relating to the development of the IEA's budget and workplan for the preceding five years.
4. Please provide all records, including communications, relating to the development of the *World Energy Outlook* reports published in the preceding five years.
5. Provide all records, including communications, relating to IEA's decisions and actions to eliminate reference scenarios based on current laws and regulations from its demand projections.
6. Please provide all records, including communications, concerning the DOE's decision to halt consideration of new U.S. LNG export permits.
  - a. Was the IEA consulted by the DOE on the IEA's "peak" demand scenarios for natural gas?
7. Please explain whether the IEA has abandoned its historical commitment to non-partisan and objective analysis in favor of climate policy advocacy, and if so, please explain its rationale.
8. Please explain the IEA's position on the development of new oil and natural gas infrastructure, including in greenfield projects.
9. Will the IEA make all data, assumptions, and methodologies contained in its reports freely available to U.S. taxpayers?
  - a. If not, why not?
10. Has the IEA conducted an analysis of the impacts of a ban on fossil energy use, including coal and natural gas, in electricity generation by 2025? If not, will the IEA commit to producing such an analysis?

Dr. Fatih Birol  
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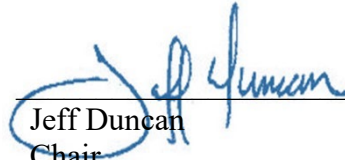
We look forward to your prompt response. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Majority staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair  
Committee on Energy and Commerce



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Jeff Duncan  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and  
Grid Security