

Biden's halt to oil and gas leasing on federal lands cheered



By Mark Gruenberg

To environmentalist cheers, President Joe Biden has halted oil and gas leasing on federal lands. His moratorium effectively halts drilling plans and reverses the former GOP Trump regime's headlong rush to open those areas to corporate exploitation at the expense of workers, residents, and the environment.

The oil and gas leasing halt was part of a wide range of pro-green orders Biden issued in what he called a "whole of government approach" to environmental solutions. It is designed to battle climate change by relying on scientific findings demanding it and then implementing solutions.

Besides halting the leasing, Biden ordered his government to "address the climate crisis at the scale and scope demanded by science," the BlueGreen Alliance, a coalition of unions and environmental organizations, said. Biden's order also said he will "center climate in our foreign policy."

The White House will "coordinate governmental solutions centered on achieving economic and environmental justice and quality, union job creation, help[ing] impacted coal communities and workers and directing federal agencies to institute science and evidence-based decision-making."

Biden pledged his government will buy U.S.-made zero-emitting cars and trucks, which is important because the federal government is one of the largest

fleet markets in the country. The feds also plan to buy "clean power," generated from wind and solar sources, he stated.

But the oil and gas leasing moratorium drew particular notice, because of how much is done on federally controlled lands, especially in the Mountain States—a GOP-dominated area, except Colorado—where the government owns a huge share of total acreage.

Biden's moratorium symbolizes "an environmental

THIS WEEK :

- **Biden's halt to oil and gas leasing on federal lands cheered**
- **Trumka praises Biden's "Buy American" executive order; GOP silent**
- **The UK is now the world hotspot for COVID-19**
- **Cuba. Video implica a miembro de la mafia anticubana en ataque al Capitolio**
- **Belgium: Workers' Party Calls for "Winter of Solidarity"**

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approach our nation has lacked for far too long," said BlueGreen Alliance Executive Director Jason Walsh, a former Obama-Biden White House aide.

"President Biden understands the reality and the severity of the climate crisis and knows how important it is to listen to experts and respond

With his signature, the president ends Trump's opening of vast areas of the U.S. to corporate exploiters.

to it at the scale that science demands while simultaneously addressing economic and racial inequality and driving the creation of family-sustaining, union jobs.”

Environmental Defense Fund President Fred Krupp agreed, adding communities of color will particularly benefit from the leasing ban. That's because not only do rapacious polluters exploit those workers, but workers' low incomes often force them and their families to live in heavily polluted areas, increasing adult illnesses such as cancer and chemical hazards to children.

That means encouraging and building “clean” factories with good, well-paying jobs, Krupp declared. Biden has said they must be union jobs, too. That's important, as only 5% or so of green jobs are union jobs, while traditional energy sources—oil, coal, natural gas, and nuclear—employ a far higher share of union workers, including construction workers who build pipelines and power plants.

The contrast led North America's Building Trades

Unions to raise the only caution flag about Biden's orders. Lumping Biden together with green groups, NABTU said “we welcome this administration and the opposition for this and hundreds of other projects to engage with us on a rational national strategy going forward that does not treat workers, their families, and entire communities as an afterthought, but makes them equal to economic and climate imperatives.” It issued that statement, which applies to the leases, after Biden yanked Trump's federal license for another controversial pipeline, Keystone XL.

Green groups also picked up another win on Jan. 26, in court. Seattle environmental attorney Jon Hasselman tweeted a federal appeals court upheld a lower court ban of more work on the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project.

The court said its sponsors, oil companies, and the Army Corps of Engineers, must undertake a full-scale environmental impact review of DAPL. That could take months or years.

Trumka praises Biden's “Buy American” executive order; GOP silent

By PAI

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka is praising Democratic U.S. President Joe Biden's executive order to federal agencies to “Buy American” when they purchase billions of dollars in goods and services.

And, in another notable development, right-wing House Republicans, epitomized by Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., the union-hating and Biden-hating former chair of the House committee that writes labor laws, shut up about the new president's decision.

Biden's order closes loopholes in current Buy American legislation. Those legal commands, which congressional Democrats often insert in money bills, order agencies to buy U.S.-made goods unless they can show a reason why they cannot do so.

Biden killed the corporate excuses to outsource purchases overseas, Trumka said.

“Our tax dollars should be used to create jobs and advance production here at home. For far too long, America's workers suffered as many corporations wrap themselves in the flag and simultaneously seek out loopholes to qualify for ‘Buy American’ status with foreign-made products,” he explained.

Though Trumka did not say so, Walmart, known for its hatred of unions, its low pay, and no benefits, is a prominent user of that dodge. Walmart also imports many of its consumer goods from low-paying Asian nations. That includes bulk goods it sells to the government.

Republican Oval Office occupant Donald Trump “used the right words but never put in place policies to affect meaningful change,” Trumka pointed out. “This executive order will close loopholes that allow agencies to sidestep ‘Buy American’ requirements and increase the thresholds for domestic content.”

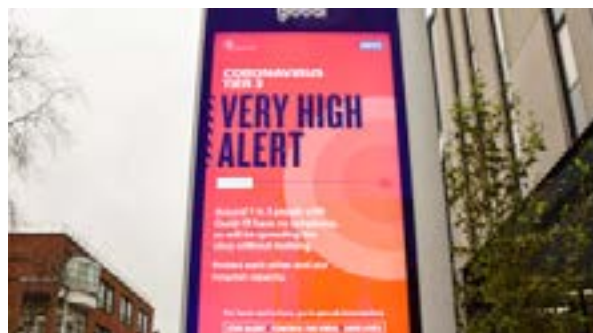
He also declared it will help revive U.S. manufacturing, another key Biden goal, by expanding the market for U.S. factory-made goods.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., noted Biden put teeth in his order by establishing a new position within his Office of Management and Budget to make sure agencies obey.

Left unsaid: In his last budget, last year, Trump tried to kill the partnership, leaving only \$5 million to close it down. It had been budgeted, in fiscal 2020, which ended last Sept. 30, at \$146 million.

The legal commands order agencies to buy U.S.-made goods unless they can show a reason why they cannot do so.

The UK is now the world hotspot for COVID-19



By Al Neal

This time last year, and up to the end of 2020, the threat of coronavirus overtaking the whole island was a constant concern, but never a conceptual reality. Yet, reality came crashing down without warning—there were no sirens, or readymade shelters for those sick and injured.

The U.K.'s official death toll in the coronavirus pandemic passed 100,000, Tuesday, Jan. 26. The government confirmed 100,162 people have died in the pandemic after testing positive for the virus, including 1,631 new deaths reported Tuesday.

“I offer my deepest condolences to everyone who has lost a loved one: fathers and mothers; brothers and sisters; sons and daughters and the many grandparents who have been taken,” said a somber, more subdued Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

“And, to all those who grieve, we make this pledge: that when we have come through this crisis, we will come together as a nation to remember everyone we lost, and to honor the selfless heroism of all those on the front line who gave their lives to save others,” he continued.

The toll of coronavirus here, besides being a grim statistic, also marks the worst civilian loss of life here since World War II by a substantial number. Around 70,000 civilians died in the 1940s—with a majority killed from Sept. 1940-May 1941 during Nazi Germany's bombing campaign.

Britain is the fifth country in the world to record

100,000 virus-related deaths, after the United States, Brazil, India, and Mexico. The U.S. has recorded more than 400,000 coronavirus deaths, the world's highest total, but its population of around 330 million is about five times the size of Britain's 67 million.

Johnson has promised a public inquiry into Britain's handling of the outbreak, once the outbreak is contained, and the crisis mitigated.

Following the news conference, Johnson met with senior government officials Tuesday evening to consider tighter border measures. U.K. citizens and residents returning home from most of Southern Africa, South America, and Portugal, will have to self-isolate in a hotel for 10-days at their own expense.

Nick Thomas-Symonds, the law-and-order spokesman for Britain's opposition Labour Party, said only a “comprehensive hotel quarantine system” would be strong enough to keep new strains of the virus from spreading in the U.K.

“It cannot be restricted to only a handful of countries, leaving gaping holes in our defenses against different strains of the virus emerging around the world,” he said.

For now, Britain is placing all hope in a successful vaccination program to help suppress the spread of coronavirus and ease lockdown measures. To date, over 6.8 million people have received their first jab of a two-dose vaccine, and the government aims to give 15 million people, including everyone over 70, a jab by Feb. 15.

**Official death
toll now passes
100,000.**

LOCAL NEWS

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Belgium: Workers' Party Calls for "Winter of Solidarity"

By Emile Schepers

The Workers' Party of Belgium, one of two major communist parties in that country, is calling for a "Winter of Solidarity." "It is shaping up to be a long winter, but we'll not leave anybody out in the cold.

"Solidarity is in our DNA" said party chair Peter Martens. "More and more people are struggling financially and mentally, both old and young people." He added that there will be a distribution of laptops, of toys for children, as well as food distribution all over the country.

Martens also called for the minimum wage, in one of the richest countries in Europe, to be raised to at least 14 euros per hour.

Cuba. Video implica a miembro de la mafia anticubana en ataque al Capitolio

Resumen Latinoamericano*

Impactante video de la insurrección en el Capitolio muestra a un alborotador diciendo que Ted Cruz 'querría que hiciéramos esto', el video ha dejado muy claro que el violento ataque al Capitolio fue provocado por una mafia de fanáticos pro-Trump.

Uno de los alborotadores que saquearon el edificio del Capitolio ese día asegura en el video que pensaba que estaba siguiendo los deseos del senador por Texas, de origen cubano, Ted Cruz.

Cruz, quien es también un prominente miembro de la mafia anticubana en Estados Unidos, se unió al presidente Donald Trump para promover la afirmación falsa de que el presidente saliente perdió ante el presidente electo Joe Biden en noviembre debido a un fraude electoral generalizado.

En el video del ataque, que ha dado a conocer The New Yorker, se puede ver a un hombre mirando a través de una carpeta en el piso del Senado refiriéndose a Cruz: «Mire, 'objeción al conteo de los votos electorales del Estado de Arizona'. Nos iba a vender todo el tiempo «.

Pero un hombre con un sombrero rojo MAGA se levantó en defensa de Cruz y le dijo al alborotador: «¡Espera, no, eso es bueno! ¡Eso es bueno! Él está con nosotros, está con nosotros».

El otro respondió: «¿Hawley, Cruz? Creo que Cruz querría que hiciéramos esto ... Entonces, creo que estamos bien».

El «Hawley», al que se referían, era el senador Josh Hawley, un republicano de Missouri que ha recibido críticas generalizadas por impugnar la victoria de Biden en el colegio electoral el 6 de enero, y por una foto que lo muestra saludando a la mafia de MAGA antes de entrar al Capitolio y expresando su solidaridad.

El día del asalto al Capitolio, el senador por Texas debía, junto a doce senadores más, objetar por «fraude» la certificación de Joe Biden.

En el discurso en que incitó a sus partidarios a asaltar el Capitolio, Trump dijo: «Caminaremos hasta el Capitolio y vitorearemos a nuestros valientes senadores y congresistas». ¿Era Ted Cruz uno de esos valientes senadores a quienes los violentos partidarios debían vitoriar?

Según el video de The New Yorker, sí. La declaración del asaltante «Él está con nosotros, está con nosotros», refiriéndose a Ted Cruz hace pensar además en una confabulación pre existente entre el grupo de senadores pro Trump y las turbas violentas que atentaron contra el símbolo de la democracia estadounidense.

*Fuente: Cubasi

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