

Trump Admin. Punishes Renewables While Bailing Out Oil and Gas

Interior Department Hits Solar And Wind Projects With Hefty Retroactive Bills Amidst After Giving Excessive Gifts To Oil And Gas Industry

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Global Research, May 21, 2020

[Western Values Project](#) 19 May 2020

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Oil and Energy](#)

Trump's Interior Department is demanding payment from the past two years from solar and wind projects on federal lands, Reuters is [reporting](#). The move, described as a "multi-million-dollar hit" to the wind and solar industries, is a stark contrast to the gifts and bailouts the administration has been showering the oil and gas industry with since the coronavirus pandemic started.

"Making renewable industries pay millions of dollars while pandering to extractive industries exposes this President's priorities," said Chris Saeger, a spokesman for Western Values Project. "The Trump administration's hypocrisy is astounding: they are using a public health crisis as an excuse to bail out the President's corporate cronies while leaving everyone else to fend for themselves."

According to the *Reuters* story, the Interior Department expects to collect \$50 million in retroactive fees from renewable projects in 2020. Interior had stopped charging renewable industries rent in 2018 to review company complaints but had consistently refused to comment on the results of that review. In contrast, Interior- run by former oil and gas lobbyist David Bernhardt- has helped oil and gas drillers on federal lands get relief from paying royalties amid an oil market slump.

The Trump administration has been blatantly bailing out the oil and gas industry during the coronavirus pandemic. In just the first two weeks of the Small Business Administration's Payroll Protection Program (PPP), oil, gas and mining companies [got a whopping \\$3.9 billion](#) in PPP funding, even though the program was designed to help small businesses, not publicly traded corporations. In its bailing out of extractive resource corporations, the administration has given PPP funding to [a foreign-owned uranium mining corporation](#) with ties to the Trump administration, a Indiana-based [coal corporation with a former Trump official as its lobbyist](#), and oil corporations that [spent millions on stock buybacks](#).

And last month, the administration granted the oil lobby another one of its wishes and made it easier for the oil and gas industry to access funding. Following requests from the Independent Petroleum Association of America, the Main Street Lending Program [eased](#) restrictions on borrowing for heavily indebted oil companies and allowed them to use the loans to refinance existing debts.

The Trump administration has also been letting corporate polluters off the hook. Since the coronavirus began, Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) all [recently announced enforcement holidays](#) for government fines, penalties and settlement payments, including for companies that had committed major environmental violations.

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