



# SSDA News

*Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades*

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## What SSDA-AT is Watching in Washington

By Roy Littlefield

There are now less than six work weeks before Congress leaves town for its month-long August recess. By the time the members return in September, the fervor of the midterms will be in full tilt and most legislative priorities will be sidelined.

Much to the chagrin of the Democratic leadership, crises and unexpected issues have dominated this year's legislative calendar and are expected to do so for much of the summer. From the privately owned and small business perspective, we continue to monitor two big pieces of legislation that could see movement this summer.

The first of these items is a yet to be negotiated new iteration of the "Build Back Better" legislation. It is clear that the version of Build Back Better (BBB) that was passed by the House late last year is dead and buried – primarily due to the opposition of Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ). However, if common sense still holds sway with the Democrats, then there is still a chance that we will see a much smaller and cleaner reconciliation bill (probably not called anything like Build Back Better!) which will include only those provisions that Senators Manchin and Sinema support. [As you probably recall, when a bill is passed using the reconciliation process, only a majority vote is required because such budget bills cannot be filibustered.] If these two Senators are willing to back any new reconciliation legislation, then look for a few items such as the extension of the child tax credit and possibly

universal pre-k, to be included. Once the process starts in earnest it should go quickly since basically there will be only two Senators writing it and that assumes that Senator Manchin doesn't pull back on the bill again.

There is a lot of pressure on the Democrats to pass something before the midterms – but whether they will be able to thread the needle amidst the various segments of their party to reach a compromise bill remains to be seen.

Also on the watch list for small business this summer is the SECURE Act 2.0, which passed the House by an overwhelming majority (414 to 5) at the end of March. The margin by which the bill passed the House certainly gives it momentum as it moves to the Senate – however, it is likely that, rather than passing the bill in its current form, the Senate will make changes or pass its own retirement plan bill and send the matter back to the House.

SSDA-AT will be closely monitoring the progress of this legislation and working to educate members about the retirement plan elements that are critical to small businesses and their owners and employees.

As we embark on yet another busy and contentious legislative season, we encourage our members to keep us apprised of the issues that they are tracking or concerned about.



# The Online Edge – What Your Business Needs to Thrive

*By: Stephanie Santore, Net Driven*

Does your business have an online presence? If so, are you doing all you can to ensure its virtual success? If not, what are you waiting for? Let's take a sneak peek at some statistical findings from the Pew Research Center. According to their most recent studies on the use of internet and technology it was found that:

- Roughly three-quarters of Americans, or 77%, now own a smartphone, which nearly doubles the former findings since the Center began its research in 2011.
- As of November 2016, nearly three-quarters, or 73% of Americans indicate that they have broadband service at home.
- Nearly seven-in-ten Americans now use social media. When the Center started tracking social media adoption in 2005, just 5% of Americans said they used these platforms. Today, 69% of U.S. adults are social media users.
- Half the public now owns a tablet computer. When the Center first began tracking tablet ownership in 2010, just 3% of Americans owned a tablet of some kind.

As you can see, now more than ever before, an online presence for your business is significant. And not just any online presence, but a quality one that provides a sense of credibility and legitimacy, turning its visitors into leads and sales, and contributing to the success of your business.

First impressions matter. If your business has a website, rest assured that internet users are navigating to it to formulate their opinion, to see what other people have to say about you, and to “screen” shop your services and products, which is much like window shopping, but with the ease of never having to actually visit your business's location.

Your business can now be accessible to the masses thanks to technology. Therefore, it's vital to have a way for potential clients to find you with the swipe of their fingertip and also to ensure you have a website that makes a good impression.

So, how do you go about trying to meet your customers' needs online?

## Let's Talk Internet Marketing Best Practices

There are several factors that play into the creation of a well-made website that will help your business's online presence generate traffic and rank effectively:

### Design & Layout

Visual presentation plays an important role in the functionality of a website. A high-performing website will provide a positive user experience. It helps to have a responsive web design. What makes a website responsive? Responsive design helps to generate leads and sales without any limitations based on user devices. So, customers can find your automotive service site on their tablet, smartphone, smart watch, etc., viewing your website efficiently from any screen size.

### Content

Content is the reason why visitors come to a site. They are seeking information about your business and its services. The key is to provide relevant content that is easy for visitors to digest. Too much or too little and your visitors might go elsewhere to find what they're looking for. Check out what Moz has to say about content regarding search engine ranking. By providing unique content that moves beyond self-promotion and is easily digestible to the user, your website offers valuable information.

### Calls to Action

*Continued on page 3*



## NET DRIVEN

*Continued from page 2*

Calls to action within a site's content and design come in the form of clickable links or custom buttons. It entices a visitor to take action beyond the page they are on, an action like submitting a form, requesting a quote, purchasing a product, or even just clicking a link that leads to another page with relevant information. Through a CTA, a user moves to take a specific action that will benefit your business. And action is what it's all about.

### **Credibility**

A business with an online footprint is a business that can be found, recognized, and confided in.

From building a solid and consistent brand across all channels, to maintaining an active social media presence, gaining positive reviews, managing your online reputation with products like Net Driven's Reputation Management.

### **Mobile Viewability**

More and more people are looking at your site from a mobile phone or web enabled device. It seems like anything with a screen and a microchip in it is capable of getting on the internet these days.

Make sure your site is viewable on a mobile internet enabled device.

### **Search Engine Optimization**

At Net Driven, we drive the traffic that drives your business! It begins with a website that keeps local search in mind.

A strong SEO foundation puts proven strategies to work and improves your ability to get found.

From understanding searcher behavior to using tested best practices, the SEO team at Net Driven works hard to ensure that your site has all of the key ingredients for SEO success. Look to us for:

- Keyword research performed for your business and target geographic
- Optimized meta tags for click through success
- Relevant industry content
- Local directory management
- SEO-friendly site architecture
- and more!

Don't have a website yet? What are you waiting for?!

Talk to a representative from Net Driven today and ask about how we can help you create a website that not only generates traffic, but turns your traffic into leads and sales!

Net Driven should be your choice for all your automotive internet marketing needs.

[Contact us today!](#)

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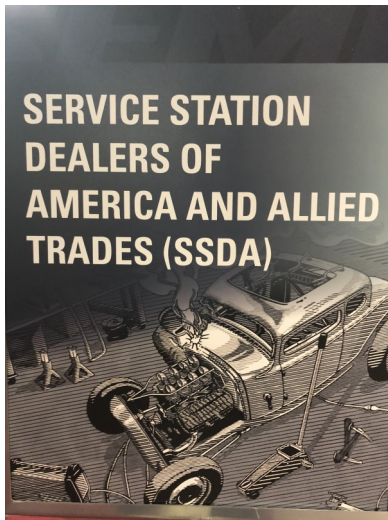
<https://www.thebalance.com/reasons-small-business-website-2948414>



## SSDA-AT Annual Meeting– **Save the Date!**

**SSDA-AT Annual Meeting- November 3, 2022**

**Location: Las Vegas Convention Center Room S-116  
(South Hall)**



**3150 Paradise Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89109  
9:30 AM- 12:00 PM**

**Agenda and details to follow!**

## **Former Energy Secretary Advocates for Nuclear, Fossil Fuels**

Speaking at the Powergen International and Distributech International summits in Dallas, former Energy Secretary and Texas Gov. Rick Perry challenged the notion that renewables will be able to meet all US energy needs by 2035 and spoke in favor of fossil fuels, advanced nuclear technologies and

carbon capture and sequestration. "Does anybody think that we're going to be able to address all of the needs of the United States by 2035, with just renewables? We're going to need it all," Perry said.



## The Hill: Manchin Blasts Biden Energy Policies at Budget Hearing



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) claimed the Biden administration's oil and gas leasing policies have "put America's energy security at risk" during testimony by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

In a hearing on the Interior Department's fiscal 2023 budget request, Manchin pushed back on the administration's repeated references to the industry's 9,000 unused leases to explain the energy crisis, arguing the administration has the power to pressure industry to use them.

"If the administration's argument is that industry is sitting on these leases ... why don't they do something about it?" Manchin said. "For example, if the concern is that too many leases are not being developed in a timely manner, the department could increase the rental rates over time to provide a financial disincentive against holding leases for speculation alone."

Manchin conceded that "new lease sales would not immediately increase production," but claimed the administration's focus on current production "puts America's energy security at risk."

The White House said in a March fact sheet that President Biden "is calling on Congress to make companies pay fees on wells from their leases that they haven't used in years and on acres of public lands that they are hoarding without producing."

Although Manchin at the time expressed openness to raising leasing fees, he said at the Thursday hearing that he believed the Interior Department could do so without legislation.

Republicans and the energy industry have blamed soaring gas prices in part on the Biden administration's policies on oil and gas leasing, including a since-ended freeze on lease sales on public lands. However, the full process of selling leases and drilling takes years and would not provide any immediate relief at the pump for consumers.

In her testimony, Haaland addressed the Interior Department's five-year schedule for offshore oil and gas leasing, saying the department will release its proposal by June 30, when the current program expires.

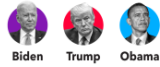
"The previous Administration stopped work on the new five-year plan in 2018, so there has been a lot to do to catch up. Varying, conflicting litigation has also been a factor," Haaland said. "As we take this next step, we will follow the science and the law, as we always do."

The hearing comes the week after the department canceled three planned lease sales in Alaska's Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Mexico, citing lack of industry interest and conflicting court rulings, respectively. Separately, a federal court barred the administration from holding a different planned lease sale in the Gulf, which the administration has not appealed.

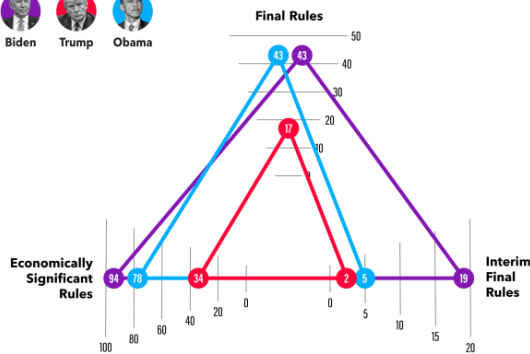
## How Biden Has Made Policy With Short-Term, Costly Rules: Bloomberg

### Looking Back

Biden's signed off on more short-term and costly rules than either Trump or Obama.



Biden Trump Obama



Note: Only includes rules with projected annual economic impact of \$100 million+ and reviewed from Jan. 21 to Dec. 31 of each president's first year.

Source: Bloomberg Government analysis of rules issued by OIRA, downloaded from reginfo.gov on May 16

Bloomberg Government

President Joe Biden relied on short-term regulations with significant economic impact to achieve key policy aims in the first year of his presidency—even as federal judges ruled he didn't have the power to write those rules.

Without a working majority in Congress, the president turned to temporary rules to rapidly meet his pandemic goals in particular. He approved 19 temporary rules, a total that exceeded even his regulation-friendly former boss Barack Obama, according to Bloomberg Government's analysis of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs' work logs.

The list of short-term regulations includes his vaccine-or-test mandate for the private sector and mask requirement in certain pre-schools.

There is pressure on the president "to adopt rules and regulations to do what Congress can't or won't," said Kristin Hickman, a University of Minnesota law professor who worked in Trump's regulations office.

Biden is expected to unveil his fall 2022 regulatory to-do list sometime this summer. Here are three takeaways from Bloomberg Government's analysis of Biden's regulations in 2021.

Biden's regulations are projected to have a hefty impact on the economy.

Biden projected that roughly a third of his rules would have an impact on the economy of at least \$100 million.

That isn't necessarily because Biden faced mounting inflation in his first year, driving up the perceived cost of his regulations, said Susan Dudley, who led the White House regulations office under President George W. Bush.

The regulations office sometimes groups rules that will significantly alter the environment, public health, or safety in the same category as those with an \$100 million or more impact on the economy. He signed off on 15 proposed and final rules written by environmental agencies, according to Bloomberg Government's analysis.

Biden also looked to the Department of Health and Human Services to write rules to slow the spread of the virus. The department, regardless of who is in the White House, tends to publish more rules projected to have an outsized impact on the economy.

The list of rules expected to have a large effect on the economy doesn't include some of Biden's most divisive regulations, including one that would undo a Trump administration rule barring abortion referrals and another that would crack down on homemade firearms, known as ghost guns.

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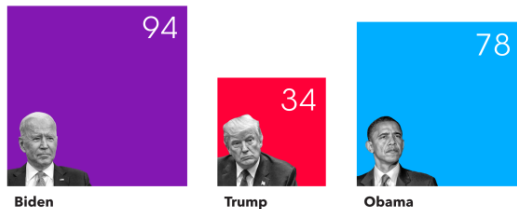
# How Biden Has Made Policy With Short-Term, Costly Rules: Bloomberg

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## Regulation Returns

Biden OK'd the most rules with a projected economic effect of at least \$100 million per year.

### Economically Significant Rules



Note: Includes economically significant rules from Jan. 21 to Dec. 31 of each president's first year.  
Source: Bloomberg Government analysis of rules issued by OIRA, downloaded from reginfo.gov on May 16

The ghost-gun proposal elicited more than 290,000 letters from individuals and advocacy groups across the country, according to data from the General Services Administration.

Biden relied on short-term rules to respond to the pandemic.

Temporary rules allow presidents to skip time-consuming regulatory hurdles if quick action is needed. They don't necessarily have an expiration date.

Obama's short-term regulations included pay limits for senior executives at companies that received stimulus funding and revisions to how the federal government supports low-income college students. Trump approved short-term rules on how restaurants should display calorie counts and another to comply with a court's decision on veterans' emergency care.

Biden also published 43 final rules. Among them: a requirement that restaurants pay tipped workers more for side work, sanctions against the military regime in Myanmar, and limits on tailpipe emissions. The emissions rule inspired nearly 189,000 letters from the public as of mid-April.

Courts pushed back on Biden's authority.

Trump-appointed judges struck down a few of Biden's most controversial rules, including his pause on evictions, vaccine-or-test requirement, and mask mandate on trains.

The judges said federal agencies didn't have the authority to write those regulations, adding that Congress hadn't given them express permission.

The Supreme Court is poised to give conservatives a new tool to further limit the power of federal regulatory agencies, after coal-mining companies and Republican-led states said the environmental regulators exceeded their authority to control greenhouse gas emissions.

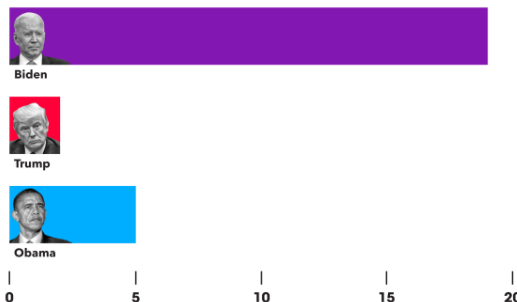
The high court has yet to decide on the case. The result could reduce how much power presidents have in future crises.

"Over the last several decades, we've gotten used to governing through" federal agencies, said Carmel Shachar, a Harvard health law professor. "The recent court cases indicate that we're entering an era that is going to walk that back."

## Rapid Regulations Reign

Biden used short-term rules to jump-start vaccinations and economic relief.

### Interim Final Rules



Note: Only includes rules with projected annual economic impact of \$100 million+ and reviewed from Jan. 21 to Dec. 31 of each president's first year.  
Source: Bloomberg Government analysis of rules issued by OIRA, downloaded from reginfo.gov on May 16

## S&P Global: US Oil Product Reserves Not 'Well Suited' to Handle Supply Disruptions: GAO



Federal petroleum product reserves are inadequate to address severe supply disruptions and available analysis is insufficient to determine what alternative federal action should be taken to mitigate supply risks, the US Government Accountability Office said May 25.

Neither the Department of Energy's Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve nor its Northeast Gasoline Supply Reserve was "well suited to address the risks of supply disruptions in the Northeast," the GAO said in a report. The agency concurred with the DOE's 2020 assessment that the reserves were too expensive to maintain and too small relative to regional demand for the fuels.

The GAO asserted that operations and maintenance of the product reserves cost on an annual basis about \$13/b, compared with just 30 cents/b to maintain the emergency crude supplies in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Further, the 1 million barrels of fuel in each product reserve would satisfy less than two days of estimated consumption in the Northeast, the GAO said.

The GAO's report was requested by Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat-California, and based on an audit that began in September.

Its release comes just days after reports circulated that the Biden administration was considering tapping the emergency diesel reserve to address the current supply crunch and help lower soaring diesel prices, averaging \$5.57/gal nationwide, up from just \$2.32/gal a year ago, and a leading contributor to escalated food prices.

The home heating oil reserve has suddenly moved into the spotlight because its ultra-low-sulfur distillate can be used as either home heating oil or diesel fuel.

The heating oil reserve was used once before, after Hurricane Sandy in 2012 to fuel first responder vehicles, while the gasoline reserve has never been tapped.

### Limitations

The report also noted limitations in releasing fuel from the product reserves that likely contributed to their rare use during short-term supply disruptions, including needing a presidential finding of a severe energy supply disruption and a requirement that sales go through a competitive bidding process

"Officials told us that it would generally take more than one week to release heating oil or gasoline from the product reserves — from the declaration of a severe energy disruption by the president to a competitive sale of the product on the open market," the GAO said.



## S&P Global: US Oil Product Reserves Not 'Well Suited' to Handle Supply Disruptions: GAO

*Continued from page 8*

By that time, supplies from other regions or countries are generally available. The GAO noted that it takes about 10 days for additional fuel from the Gulf of Mexico to arrive by ship to the New York Harbor.

And in March, DOE officials told the GAO that the Biden administration was considering whether to continue or recommend closing the two reserves.

The department itself recommended closing the reserves in past years' budget proposals given the lack of effective use of the reserves.

The GAO said it could not determine "what role DOE should take going forward" because the department has not fully considered future risks to regional petroleum product supplies or potential benefits of alternatives to the existing stockpiles for mitigating supply risk.

The DOE has not examined "whether alternative structures or policies could be put in place to make product reserves more responsive during emergencies or how much such alternatives would cost," the GAO said.

"Alternatives could include different reserve sizes, geographic locations, fuel composition, ownership structure, or release criteria."

### Further study needed

As such, the agency reiterated a recommendation it made to the DOE in 2018 for it to study the need, costs and benefits of setting up product reserves in other regions, particularly all regions identified as vulnerable.

If fully implemented, that study could inform decisions on federal actions that could mitigate supply risks, the GAO said. But "DOE disagreed with this recommendation, and it has no plans to further study product reserves, according to DOE officials," the agency said in the report.

The DOE did not respond to a request for comment on the GAO report.

Tighter inventories and robust oil demand as Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues have created much pain at the pump.

Record high diesel prices, topping \$6/gal at some US pumps, may be beginning to take their toll on demand, as distillate stockpiles rose for a second straight week, according to the Energy Information Administration

Distillate inventories were at 106.9 million barrels the week ended May 20, rising by 1.657 million barrels on top of the prior week's 1.235-million-barrel increase.



## IRS Reminds Employers of Penalty Relief Related to Claims for the Employee Retention Credit

The Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service have received requests from taxpayers and their advisors for relief from penalties arising when additional income tax is owed because the deduction for qualified wages is reduced by the amount of a retroactively claimed employee retention tax credit (ERTC), but the taxpayer is unable to pay the additional income tax because the ERTC refund payment has not yet been received.

Treasury and the IRS are aware that this situation may arise, in part, due to the IRS's backlog in processing adjusted employment tax returns (e.g., Form 941-X) on which the taxpayers claim ERTC retroactively. Based on applicable law, IRS guidance provides that an employer must reduce its income tax deduction for the ERTC qualified wages by the amount of the ERTC for the tax year in which such wages were paid or incurred. Taxpayers that claimed the ERTC retroactively and filed an amended income tax return reducing their deduction for the ERTC qualified wages paid or incurred in the tax year for which the ERTC is retroactively claimed have an increased income tax liability, but may not yet have received their ERTC refund.

This release reminds taxpayers that, consistent with the relief from penalties for failure to timely pay noted in Notice 2021-49, they may be eligible for relief from penalties for failing to pay their taxes if they can show reasonable cause and not willful neglect for the failure to pay.

In general, taxpayers may also qualify for administrative relief from penalties for failing to pay on time under the IRS's First Time Penalty Abatement program if the taxpayer:

Did not previously have to file a return or had no penalties for the three prior tax years,

Filed all currently required returns or filed an extension of time to file and

Paid, or arranged to pay, any tax due.

For general information, visit the Penalty Relief page on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).



## EPA Seeking Industry Help in Shaping New Grants

The U.S. EPA is working to build several grant programs from the ground up thanks to an influx of money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and it is reaching out to stakeholders to make sure the programs will meet industry needs.

Nicole Villamizar, acting associate division director for the EPA Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division, opened the Intergovernmental Recycling Infrastructure and Education and Outreach Feedback session on May 18 by telling attendees she was “not looking for consensus today,” but rather to hear individual experiences.

John Lucey, special assistant to the EPA administrator, said the EPA planned to make “significant investments in health, equity and resilience” with the funding, and told the roughly 220 Zoom attendees that “this is an opportunity for you to tell EPA how these funds can best meet your needs.”

Two grant programs the EPA is currently creating from scratch are the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling program (SWIFR) and the Recycling Education and Outreach program. Both are funded by the bipartisan infrastructure bill that was signed into law last fall.

SWIFR has been allocated \$275 million for 2022-26, which is about \$55 million per year. However, the funds do not expire, so the department can be flexible about when they are spent, Villamizar said. Eligible entities for SWIFR include states and political subdivisions of states like counties, as well as tribal governments and others. Nonprofit groups and public-private partnerships are not eligible for the grant.

The Recycling Education and Outreach program was allocated \$75 million for 2022-26, which is about \$15 million per year. Nonprofit organizations and public-private partnerships are eligible for that grant, she said.

The EPA’s goal is to open applications for the first round of funding by September. Villamizar said there’s no match requirement written in the legislation, and that the education and outreach program is “much more prescriptive under the legislation” than SWIFR.

There is also no allocation formula outlined in the legislation, so the EPA will need to determine that, she added, though the education grant is competitive.

One participant asked if chemical recycling technologies would be eligible for grants, but Villamizar said the EPA

was not sure yet and was looking for feedback on that, as well.

Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling program feedback

For the SWIFR grant, attendees in the Zoom meeting chat recommended that the grants focus on waste reduction over waste management, meaning prioritizing reducing, reusing and recycling. There were also many people calling for data collection.

Attendees said there’s a critical need to fund transportation, more or new sorting and processing equipment, CDL drivers and vehicles, composting services and other technology updates.

Access to markets for rural places and a focus on local efforts were also brought up, as were tie-ins with the public education system and the need for flexibility, to meet the needs of all communities.

On a policy level, a need for more extended producer responsibility laws, uniform labeling and a national standard were all suggested. In terms of grant structure, attendees suggested that SWIFR grants should be on a two-year timeframe, because infrastructure takes time to develop and build.

Recycling Education and Outreach program feedback

For the education and outreach grants, participants said staffing was the biggest challenge.

Others said that infrastructure changes and improvements, such as a national recycling standard and labeling system, should come before any public education campaigns.

Viewers said they needed help measuring contamination rates, federal support getting state measurements and systems aligned, funding for waste characterization studies, assistance with on-the-ground cart contamination checks and training for data collection.

When asked what the EPA could do to make applications for the grants easier, attendees overwhelmingly said they lacked staff to write grants and asked for training, EPA staff support, simple applications with fillable PDFs, step-by-step checklists and example grants.

Some also requested that hiring a grant writer be included as part of the grant funding.



## Restricting U.S. Fuel Exports Would be 'Unwise', says Chevron CEO, Reuters

Chevron Corp Chief Executive Michael Wirth said on Wednesday he expected oil and motor fuel prices to stay high but cautioned against limiting fuel exports to guarantee U.S. supplies.

The CEO of the second-largest U.S. oil producer also expects Russian oil volumes now reaching the global market to decline in the coming months as sanctions, tanker insurance costs and the departure of Western oilfield service firms weigh on exports.

The White House has not ruled out restrictions on fuel exports to ease soaring domestic prices, the U.S. Department of Energy said last week. Global supplies for refined products are tight, in part due to sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine and the closing of refineries.

"Restricting exports would be in my opinion an unwise move," Wirth said at Bernstein's Annual Strategic Decisions conference. "But I think it is something you can't rule out."

Wirth predicted fuel prices and refining margins will rise further as China eases its COVID lockdowns, as international travel improves and fewer Russia barrels reach the market, possibly causing shortages.

"Somewhere in the world in the next few months you'll start to see product shortages materialize," said Wirth. "I think Europe is the obvious place."

He said the United States was also vulnerable if hurricanes affect production this summer.

While incremental oil supply could spur an eventual U.S. lifting of sanctions against oil producers Venezuela and Iran, it might not be "a determinant factor," he said.

Chevron is not lobbying for a removal of sanctions against Venezuela, where it is the last remaining U.S. producer, Wirth said, describing the country as having been "challenging for a couple of decades."

The CEO did not rule out the potential for disruptions facing Chevron's oil production in Kazakhstan, from where its oil moves through a pipeline that crosses Russian territory, saying that "anything that involves Russia carries a different level of concern today than it once did."

Wirth predicted European Union sanctions on Russia and, more importantly, that European insurance companies refusing to insure oil tankers carrying Russian oil will cause those oil flows to ebb.

"You will see over balance of this year that Russian production will gradually ramp down as it gets harder to move it and (storage) tanks in Russia fill up."



## ExxonMobil Loses Bid to Nix Climate Change Lawsuit, AP

Massachusetts' highest court rejected a bid by ExxonMobil to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the state that accuses the oil giant of misleading the public about the role its fossil fuels play in causing climate change.

The lawsuit filed in 2019 by Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey alleges Exxon launched an effort, "reminiscent of the tobacco industry's long denial campaign about the dangerous effects of cigarettes," to deceive consumers and investors about climate change.

Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court upheld a lower court ruling that rejected the company's argument that a state law shielded it from the lawsuit.

A phone message seeking comment was left with Exxon, which has denied spreading disinformation about the contribution of fossil fuels to global warming.

In a congressional hearing last year, the company's CEO, Darren Woods, told lawmakers that its public statements on climate "are and have always been truthful" and that Exxon has "long acknowledged the reality and risks of climate change" and "devoted significant resources to addressing those risks."

The Massachusetts lawsuit says Exxon engaged in a "sophisticated, multi-million dollar campaign" to sow doubt in climate science and downplay the link between fossil fuels and climate change. The lawsuit says Exxon also undertook "greenwashing campaigns" in an effort to portray itself as environmentally responsible.

"Rather than honestly disclose and mitigate climate change risks, ExxonMobil's misrepresentations about and failures to disclose those risks have delayed the needed transition to clean ener-

gy around the world and make these existential climate-driven threats to the global economy more likely to occur," the complaint says.

Healey called the court's ruling a "resounding victory" in the state's efforts to "stop Exxon from lying to investors and consumers."

"Exxon's repeated attempts to stonewall our lawsuit have been baseless, and this effort was no different. We look forward to proceeding with our case and having our day in court to show how Exxon is breaking the law and to put an end to the deception once and for all," she said in a statement.

Lawyers for Exxon argued in court documents that the company's statements about climate change and energy policy were "protected petitioning activity" even if they were made to defend the company's reputation.

But the top court said the law Exxon claimed should protect the company in this case doesn't apply to government enforcement actions brought by the attorney general.

It's the latest twist in yearslong battle between Massachusetts and Exxon. The company previously unsuccessfully sued Massachusetts in an effort to block Healey's investigation into Exxon and climate change.



## Biden says Inflation is Top Priority after Meeting with Fed Chair Jerome Powell, NBC



President Joe Biden met with Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell to discuss the administration's plan to combat high inflation, which Biden said has become

his top domestic priority.

Biden said the Federal Reserve will play a key role in bringing down the highest inflation rates in decades, but that he wouldn't "interfere with their critically important work."

"My plan to address inflation starts with the simple proposition: Respect the Fed, respect the Fed's independence, which I have done and will continue to do," Biden told reporters during the meeting with Powell, who was confirmed this month to a second term as Fed chair.

Ahead of the meeting, the White House said Biden planned to speak with Powell about "the state of the American and global economy, and the president's top economic priority: addressing inflation as we transition from a historic economic recovery to stable, steady growth that works for working families."

Biden's meeting with Powell in the Oval Office came as he wrestles with a low approval rating and criticism from Republicans, who blame him for the economy's troubles. The president, however, has pointed to the war in Ukraine and supply chain issues for rising prices for gas and other necessities.

The meeting also took place about five months before November's midterm elections, as voters say inflation and the economy are their top concerns.

In an op-ed published by The Wall Street Journal on Monday laying out his plan to fight inflation,

Biden said the Federal Reserve "has a primary responsibility to control inflation."

Biden said his plan calls on Congress to revise the tax code, reduce the deficit, make housing more affordable and lower prescription drug costs. He also said Congress could help immediately by passing clean energy tax credits and investments he's proposed.

Those measures currently lack enough support in Congress, which isn't expected to take any action on them before the midterm elections.

"A dozen CEOs of America's largest utility companies told me earlier this year that my plan would reduce the average family's annual utility bills by \$500 and accelerate our transition from energy produced by autocrats," Biden wrote. "We can also reduce the cost of everyday goods by fixing broken supply chains, improving infrastructure, and cracking down on the exorbitant fees that foreign ocean freight companies charge to move products."

Biden also said in the op-ed that the U.S. needs to continue reducing the federal deficit to help ease prices, which he said can be done through his proposals to change the tax code.

"The Internal Revenue Service should have the resources to collect taxes that Americans already owe," he wrote. "We should level the international taxation playing field so companies no longer have an incentive to shift jobs and profits overseas. And we should end the outrageous unfairness in the tax code that allows a billionaire to pay lower rates than a teacher or firefighter."

To fight inflation rates that have reached 40-year highs, the Federal Reserve raised its core interest rate in early May by 0.5 percent, which was its second hike in two months and the largest increase since 2000.

## Opinion: What Quitting Your Job Won't Fix

By: Aliana Love



It was the third session I'd had with Lee, a talented engineer working for a large multinational firm. He had been selected to participate in a development program designed to expand his self-knowledge and business skill set, while broadening his organizational exposure through strong mentoring and sponsorship.

It was viewed as an accomplishment to be selected for the program, and many previous graduates received promotions within a year of completing the experience. Lee certainly had a shot at the same opportunity, but I became concerned about his likelihood of progression after yet another conversation in which he complained about his boss.

Lee worked for James, a demanding manager who was capable of taking on multiple projects at the same time. James had an enormous capacity for balancing deadlines and deliverables without letting the pace of things overwhelm him. Because he could run fast and hard, he thought others could do the same.

But Lee was floundering under the pressure. Not only couldn't he keep up with the work requests James seemed to thrust upon him, Lee was also reluctant to say "no" when asked to do more. Consequently, he was routinely buried under a mountain of work that interfered with his personal time off and led to long hours.

The speed of change in his organization was another challenge. It didn't permit Lee to apply his usual methodical, process-oriented approach to

getting things done. He had to be able to shift midstream from project to project to keep up with customer requirements. Consequently, Lee felt untethered from the methodologies that had allowed him to reach his current level of success. He feared that the way of operating he felt forced to adopt would lead to his failure.

Over time, these mounting pressures made Lee resentful of James. He viewed his boss as a tyrant who didn't appreciate the burden his work demands put on Lee. Yet, when I asked if he'd shared what he was experiencing with James, Lee replied, "I haven't exactly told him. I've applied for another job anyway, and I think I'm getting an offer next week."

As I pondered how this situation had materialized and who had responsibility for changing it, Lee featured prominently in the equation. He was struggling with a few inner demons that had led him to his present circumstances, and those needed to be addressed. Secretly, Lee feared that James would think him incompetent for being unable to manage the workload. In addition, he expected James to read his mind and know instinctively what he needed and where he was in managing his projects.

Even the best bosses need feedback and to be in partnership with the person they're trying to lead. Lee, however, came from a culture where he'd been taught to respect authority and never push back, so he put himself in a one-down position in the relationship with James.

Secondly, James was unaware of the impact of his management style and certainly wasn't learning about it from Lee. Therefore, they had no opportunity to change their interactions with one another. With these factors at play, I failed to see how things would be different if Lee accepted another position. His lack of communication about his needs, and his resistance to taking ownership of his workload, would follow him to the next job.

## Opinion: What Quitting Your Job Won't Fix

By: Aliana Love

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The “inner defeatist”

Much of Lee’s discomfort with confronting James had to do with what Brenda Bence, author of “The Forgotten Choice: Shift Your Inner Mindset, Shape Your Outer World,” would call his “inner defeatist.” Lee lacked what Bence would call a positive “anchor belief” that supported his success and guided his inner dialogue.

When Lee considered approaching his boss about his workload, he was derailed by his anchor belief: “I’m not in control of my own destiny.” That mindset prompted Lee to believe that James and the company would ignore his needs, so he never shared them. It’s no wonder he became overwhelmed at work. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy of his own creation.

Two of the most important factors in silencing the inner defeatist, according to Bence, are wanting to do so and becoming aware of your inner conversations. “If you sense any form of fear, anger, judgment, criticism, attack, blame, jealousy, irritation, disgust, arrogance — anything that doesn’t naturally feel good — you can bet it’s the Inner Defeatist talking,” warns Bence.

Lee would have benefitted from adopting the anchor belief of “My boss wants to support my success.” It might have prevented the cascade of events that led him to search for another job and feel so miserable in the one he had.

That same anchor belief could have propelled Lee to take positive steps to resolve his workload woes by:

**Establishing priorities.** While Lee could argue that all his work projects were important, some are more urgent than others. As the environment became more chaotic and unpredictable with customers, Lee needed more frequent meetings to reestablish priorities with James and keep him apprised of project progress.

**Clarifying roles.** Lee often felt that he was being asked to take on assignments that were the work of other departments. It’s not unusual during times of rapid change for departmental roles to become blurred as individuals work toward a common goal or to overcome roadblocks to project success. Lee needed more frequent check-ins with James to confirm how roles and responsibilities might be shifting and identify what was in Lee’s purview and what was not.

**Identifying obstacles.** Because Lee was closest to issues related to customer concerns, he was in a unique position to understand how various departments within the company were affecting customer satisfaction. Departments often had competing priorities or were unaware of the larger impact their decisions might have on meeting customer needs. Lee tried to address these issues on his own, leaving James unaware of conflicts that he could have helped resolve.

**Learning to ask for help.** Identifying what’s going well and where you’re struggling is the first step to getting unstuck. Lee needed to learn that asking your boss for help isn’t a sign of incompetence; it’s using your resources wisely. Many leaders are demanding of their people, but they’re also demanding on behalf of their people. They’ll do everything possible to get their teams the support they need for success.

It’s a good time to ask, “What inner defeatist have I been listening to? What anchor belief would better serve me?”







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