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United States Senate

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LILA HELMS, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
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March 15, 2023

Dr. Jon Creyts
Chief Executive Officer
Rocky Mountain Institute
2490 Junction Place, Suite 200
Boulder, CO 80301

Dear Dr. Creyts,

I write today seeking information about the Rocky Mountain Institute's ("RMI") role in recent efforts by the Consumer Product Safety Commission ("CPSC") to impose a de facto ban on gas stoves.

While the Biden administration's efforts to extinguish gas stoves were only recently exposed,¹ RMI began advocating for this radical goal years ago. In May 2019, RMI tweeted that "Your #gas stove has to go. If our society is going to solve the #climate crisis, one of the things we must do is stop burning gas in our buildings."² In 2020, RMI employees appear to have deemphasized in promotional materials any association between gas stoves and climate change in favor of gas stoves' alleged health risks. RMI editorial director Christian Roselund wrote in an article on RMI's website that "[o]f all the dangers to safe indoor air, one stands out for its immunity to regulation: gas stoves," and noted that the "biggest promise" in addressing "indoor air pollution from gas stoves" is "the movement to phase out gas stoves and other appliances in new construction all together."³ That same year, Brady Seals, a senior associate at RMI, urged lawmakers and regulators to "act now to rectify the lack of regulation protecting people from gas stove pollution."⁴

RMI then began pushing forward numerous reports attributing gas stoves to high levels of nitrous oxide and childhood asthma. For example, the authors of the April 11, 2022 "Emissions in the Kitchen" report prepared by NYU Law's Institute for Policy Integrity—a liberal think tank focused on climate and energy policy—"extended their sincere gratitude" to Mr. Seals, Denise Grab, and Jim Dennison (members of RMI's carbon-free building team) for "review[ing] and

¹ Ari Natter, *US Safety Agency to Consider Ban on Gas Stoves Amid Health Fears*, BLOOMBERG (Jan. 9, 2023), available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-09/us-safety-agency-to-consider-ban-on-gas-stoves-amid-health-fears?leadSource=verify%20wall>.

² @RockyMtnInst, Twitter (May 1, 2019, 1:07PM), available at <https://twitter.com/RockyMtnInst/status/1123635060740116481>.

³ Christian Roselund, *Why Is Indoor Air Pollution Largely Unregulated?* RMI (May 13, 2020), available at <https://rmi.org/why-is-indoor-air-pollution-largely-unregulated/>.

⁴ Brady Seals, *Indoor Air Pollution: The Link Between Climate and Health*, RMI (May 5, 2020) available at <https://rmi.org/indoor-air-pollution-the-link-between-climate-and-health>.

provid[ing] valuable feedback on [the] report.”⁵ Mr. Seals also coauthored a December 2022 report titled, “Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States.”⁶ That report, however, was widely criticized, with even RMI admitting that it does not demonstrate a causal relationship between gas stoves and asthma.⁷ Nevertheless, it remains posted on RMI’s website, with a caption exclaiming that the new “research from RMI” is “the first time that anybody has quantified how much gas stoves can be linked to childhood asthma in the United States.”⁸

The RMI-backed reports proved useful to CPSC’s recent gas stove putsch. Last fall, CPSC Commissioner Richard Trumka, Jr.—a Biden appointee—authored an internal memo in which he concluded that “[t]here is sufficient information available for CPSC to issue a[] [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking] in FY 2023 proposing to ban gas stoves in homes.”⁹ He reached that conclusion based, in part, on the Institute for Policy Integrity’s report.¹⁰ Although Mr. Trumka withdrew his attempted formal rulemaking aimed at banning gas stoves,¹¹ CPSC nonetheless has taken the necessary first step toward a ban. On March 1, 2023, CPSC issued a Request for Information (“RFI”) “on chronic hazards associated with gas ranges and proposed solutions.”¹²

⁵ Laura A. Figueroa and Jack Lienke, *The Emissions in the Kitchen: How the Consumer Product Safety Commission Can Address the Risks of Indoor Air Pollution from Gas Stoves*, New York University Institute for Policy Integrity, (Apr. 11, 2022), available at <https://policyintegrity.org/publications/detail/the-emissions-in-the-kitchen>.

⁶ Talor Gruenwald, Brady Seals et al., *Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States*, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (Dec. 21, 2022), available at <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/20/1/75>.

⁷ See Breanne Deppish, *What To Know About the Study Behind the Push to Ban Gas Stoves*, THE WASHINGTON EXAMINER (Jan. 11, 2023), available at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy-environment/what-to-know-gas-stove-study>; Thomas Catenacci, *New Seeping Analysis Debunks Reports Blaming Gas Stoves for Respiratory Illness*, FOX NEWS (Mar. 2, 2023), available at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/new-sweeping-analysis-debunks-reports-blaming-gas-stoves-respiratory-illness>; *RMI Admits Their Report Does Not Demonstrate Relationship Between Gas Stoves and Asthma*, American Gas Association (Jan. 13, 2023), available at <https://www.aga.org/news/news-releases/release-rmi-admits-their-report-does-not-demonstrate-relationship-between-gas-stoves-and-asthma/#:~:text=RMI%20admits%20their%20report%20does%20not%20demonstrate%20relationship%20between%20gas%20stoves%20and%20asthma,-Jan%202013%2C%202023&text=Washington%2C%20D.C.%20%E2%80%93RMI%20today%20finally,gas%20stove%20use%20and%20asthma>.

⁸ Talor Gruenwald, Brady Seals et al., *Report 2022: Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States*, RMI, available at <https://rmi.org/insight/population-attributable-fraction-of-gas-stoves-and-childhood-asthma-in-the-united-states/>.

⁹ Memorandum from the Office of Commissioner Rich Trumka, *NPR Proposing Ban on Gas Stoves (Indoor Air Quality)*, CPSC (Oct. 25, 2022).

¹⁰ Commissioner Trumka also ignored evidence to the contrary, including a multi-year study of gas stove use published in *The Lancet*, which “detected no evidence of an association between the use of gas as a cooking fuel and either asthma symptoms or asthma diagnosis.” See Gary Wong et al., *Cooking Fuels and Prevalence of Asthma: A Global Analysis of Phase Three of the International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood*, THE LANCET (May 13, 2013), available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(13\)70073-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(13)70073-0/fulltext).

¹¹ *Minutes of Commission Meeting, Decisional Matter: Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Plan*, CPSC (Oct. 26, 2022), available at https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Commission-Meeting-Minutes-FY-2023-Operating-Plan_0.pdf?VersionId=wiJw89I902pxZ_6C.Zz08whJ6l6.9fo5.

¹² See Breanne Deppisch, *US Agency Seeks Input on Gas Stoves in Step Toward Regulation* (Mar. 1, 2023), available at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy-environment/us-agency-seeks-input-on-gas-stoves-in-step-toward-regulation>; *Ballot Vote Sheet re Draft Federal Register Notice: “Request for information on chronic hazards associated*

CPSC’s blind reliance on RMI-supported gas stove pieces to support potential rulemaking is troubling. And there are additional indicators that RMI may be working closely with the administration to advance its radical agenda:

- As revealed in information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by Americans for Public Trust, Department of Energy (“DOE”) Secretary Jennifer Granholm met privately with RMI’s former CEO, Jules Kortenhorst, in June 2021.¹³
- Fox News reported that according to White House visitor logs, on March 17, 2022, White House climate czar Ali Zaidi met privately with RMI leaders, including Mr. Kortenhorst, John Coequyt (RMI’s government affairs director), and Sarah Ladislaw (RMI’s managing director and U.S. program leader).¹⁴
- DOE named RMI a *Better Climate Challenge* ally.¹⁵
- The recommendations DOE sets forth in its *Better Climate Challenge* mirror RMI’s plans for residential, commercial, and industrial buildings to transition away from natural gas furnaces and water heaters¹⁶ and for commercial kitchens to replace their gas equipment with electric.¹⁷
- DOE Secretary Granholm used the discredited December 2022 report on childhood asthma to promote the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides tax credits for households to switch from gas to electric stoves.¹⁸

with gas ranges and proposed solutions,” CPSC (Feb. 22, 2023), available at <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/DraftFederalRegisterNoticeRequestforinformationonchronichazardsassociatedwithgasrangesandproposedsolutions.pdf?VersionId=d4C1FoGDPbvgnheTXJ21PnuH6BnmvNJU>.

¹³ REVEALED: Biden’s Energy Secretary Privately Met with China-Connected Activist Group Pushing Ban on Gas Stoves, Americans for Public Trust (Feb. 10, 2023), available at <https://americansforpublictrust.org/news/revealed-bidens-energy-secretary-privately-met-with-china-connected-activist-group-pushing-ban-on-gas-stoves/>.

¹⁴ Thomas Catenacci and Cameron Cawthorne, *White House Climate Czar Met Privately With Eco Groups Pushing Gas Stove Bans*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 11, 2023), available at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/white-house-climate-czar-met-privately-eco-group-pushing-gas-stove-bans>.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Energy, *Better Climate Challenge Allies*, <https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/climate-challenge/allies>.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Energy, *Decarbonizing HVAC and Water Heating in Commercial Buildings*, Better Buildings, (Nov. 2021), available at <https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/Decarbonizing%20HVAC%20and%20Water%20Heating%20in%20Commercial%20Buildings%2011.21.pdf>.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Energy, *Low Carbon Technology Strategies: Commercial Kitchen*, Better Buildings (Oct. 2021), available at https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/Kitchen_Resource_BB_Carbon_Strategies.pdf.

¹⁸ @SecGranholm, Twitter (Jan. 4, 2023, 3:30 PM), available at https://twitter.com/SecGranholm/status/1610735318340075544?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1610735318340075544%7Ctwtgr%5Ecfaaafe4acd20dd7277abf3cb88f5451fd1287f%7Ctwcon%5Esl1&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2F

What makes all of this even more concerning is RMI's close ties to the Chinese government. According to research reported on by Fox News:

RMI is a member of the China Clean Transportation Partnership, a green group connected to the Chinese government, and its only office outside the U.S. is located in Beijing, China's capital city. And RMI board member Wei Ding previously served as the chairman of the China International Capital Corporation, a bank partially owned by the Chinese government. The group also collaborated with the Chinese state agency National Development and Reform Commission to study net-zero pathways for the nation and is a member of the China Clean Transportation Partnership, a green group with significant ties to the Chinese government.¹⁹

To better understand RMI's role in the Biden administration's apparent whole-of-government approach to eliminate gas-powered appliances and systems without congressional authorization, I am seeking further data and information.

Please provide written answers and relevant documents in response to the following questions no later than March 29, 2023. In your response, please specifically identify the question to which you are responding. If you are refusing to respond to a question, please state so explicitly.

1. State whether any employee, director, or executive of RMI, or any member of its board of trustees, including Wei Ding, discussed gas stoves or ranges with any person at CPSC, including Commissioner Trumka and his staff. If so, please: (i) provide a list of all persons who took part in each discussion, (ii) identify the dates and manner of each discussion, and (iii) provide all documents and communications regarding the discussion(s).
2. State whether any employee, director, or executive of RMI, or any member of its board of trustees, including Wei Ding, discussed CPSC's work, or potential work, related to gas stoves or ranges with anyone in the White House or anyone else in the administration. If so, please: (i) provide a list of all persons who took part in each discussion, (ii) identify the dates and manner of each discussion, and (iii) provide all documents and communications regarding the discussion(s).
3. State whether RMI has ever received any funding from any entity or individual associated with the Chinese government. Please answer with a "yes" or "no" before providing any further response. For all other monies or support provided to RMI in connection with that report, (i) identify the amount of money or describe the type of support, (ii) identify the date on which it was provided, (iii) state the purpose for which it was provided and (iv) identify any studies, reports, articles, or any other publications that were generated through that funding or support.

¹⁹ Thomas Catenacci, *Top Republican Raises Alarm on Biden Energy Secretary's Work with China-connected Group Pushing Gas Stove Ban*, FOX NEWS (Feb. 28, 2023), available at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/top-republican-raises-alarm-biden-energy-secretarys-work-china-connected-group-pushing-gas-stove-ban>.

4. State whether any person or entity provided RMI with any money or support (*i.e.*, goods or services) in connection with the December 21, 2022 report titled, “Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States.”²⁰ Please answer with a “yes” or “no” before providing any further response. For all other monies or support provided to RMI in connection with that report, (i) identify the amount of money or describe the type of support, (ii) identify the date on which it was provided, (iii) state the purpose for which it was provided and (iv) identify any studies, reports, articles, or any other publications that were generated through that funding or support.
5. State whether any employee, director, or executive of RMI, or any member of its board of trustees has ever discussed government policies related to gas stoves or gas ranges with any entity, agency, or individual associated with the Chinese government. If so, please: (i) provide a list of all persons who took part in each discussion, (ii) identify the dates and manner of each discussion, and (iii) provide all documents and communications regarding these discussions.
6. State whether RMI has provided any money or support (*i.e.* goods or services) to any other entities related to research, publications, or advocacy concerning gas stoves. Please answer with a “yes” or “no” before providing any further response. For all other monies or support provided to an entity, (i) identify the recipient, (ii) identify the amount of money or describe the type of support, (iii) identify the date on which it was provided, (iv) state the purpose for which it was provided and (v) identify any studies, reports, articles, or any other publications that were generated through that funding or support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
Ranking Member

²⁰ See Gruenwald, *supra* note 6.