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We need immediate increased oil production in New Mexico!

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By **David Tofsted and Juan Garcia**

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An oft quoted story purports that when Marie Antoinette, queen of France, was told that peasants were starving because of lack of bread, she replied, 'Let them eat cake.' That story is legendary, but it is true that the king and queen lived completely different lifestyles than the peasants of France.

Today, poor New Mexicans face gasoline prices over \$4/gallon. While the elitists surrounding both the Biden and Lujan Grisham administrations think this is a great way to wean the public off fossil fuels, many are suffering.

Everyday commuters, farmers, ranchers, and retirees are seeing price spikes in goods because, despite the supposedly "temporary" inflation we were told about last year, prices of most commodities depend on the costs of bringing those commodities to market.

And it's not just the commuting and transporting of food to market that is impacting costs to feed our families. Plastic containers are petroleum by-products. And Nitrogen-based fertilizers involve methane as they are manufactured. Some 80% of crop yields depend on hydrocarbons.

Recently, when asked what he would do to bring down oil prices, President Biden claimed there was nothing he could do, that it was Putin who caused the recent price spikes due to his war in Ukraine. Yet these price hikes did not happen just in the last two weeks.

Gasoline prices were just at or slightly above \$2/gal when Biden took office. Just prior to the start of hostilities in Ukraine the price was up to about \$3.50/gallon in New Mexico. Since the Russian caused war caused began, prices have soared upwards of \$1/gallon, but that first \$1.50/gallon increase is on Biden's head alone.

And the cause? Immediately after taking office the Biden Administration canceled all oil leasing on federal lands. Upon being sued by numerous states, Biden was forced to restart licensing, but decided to impose an equally crippling environmentally based "social cost" measure to dramatically increase the costs of such leases. Sued again, and losing again, Biden again chose to cut off all new leases, claiming now that he was appealing the court's rulings. Meanwhile "Rome is burning."

At the state level, Governor Lujan Grisham has enacted a new methane rule that is a clear attack on our oil and gas industry. It allows venting or flaring of natural gas only in limited situations during drilling or production processes. While large corporate producers may be able to absorb the extra costs of handling these new requirements, it is the small producers who are being hurt. But, again, Grisham doesn't care.

And similarly, when asked about these excessive energy costs, transportation secretary Pete Buttigieg recommended consumers go out and buy an expensive new electric car whose battery will die in 7 years and that requires an hour or more to recharge every 50-100 miles. Yet the administration claims that restarting the Keystone XL pipeline would be a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Isn't this what they said regarding the "temporary" inflation that has now been with us for over a year?

What we need is a strong New Mexico legislature that will fight for the taxpayers and poor who are being beaten down by Grisham's and Biden's war on hydrocarbon fuels and the failure to maintain America's energy independence. These policies have placed the U.S. in a dire situation making us dependent on other nations.

We also have the issue that Biden created in making America vulnerable to foreign governments for oil. Why has this happened when just before he took office, America was energy independent? We can certainly see the value of that independence now as America is scrambling to get the fossil fuels we need from other authoritarian countries when we should be producing them at home.

Which brings us to part of the solution to the duress that Americans are feeling when they fill their gas tanks and try to feed their families: 1) finish the Keystone pipeline; 2) allow states, like New Mexico, that have an abundance of oil and natural gas to bring those products to market in abundance.

America and the state of New Mexico can be the pillar of strength with the right leadership. Maybe that will happen soon.

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