



NH Pols Oppose Energy Production, Ask Biden Admin for Price Relief

Chris Woodward

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A group of New England senators is asking the Biden administration for relief from the soaring energy costs, even as they back restrictions on energy production, critics say.

Sens. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Jack Reed (D-R.I.) led a group of senators sending the Biden administration a letter asking for price-relieving policies as winter approaches and energy prices rise. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) is on board as well.

“Given the current state of energy markets and the lingering economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – and in preparation for the cold-weather season in New England – we urge your administration to consider and prepare to take targeted actions,” they wrote. “These predicted costs will have a very real effect on the ability of many New England families to keep their homes at a safe temperature this winter (and) no family should have to make the decision between paying their bill to keep their children warm, putting food on the table, and keeping the lights on.”

Gov. Chris Sununu was unimpressed by the senators’ efforts.

“Talk is cheap solutions manner, especially when it comes to energy and heating oil,” Sununu said regarding the letter. “This winter, you’ve got to come up with some solution, give us an idea. Where’s the leadership?”

Some see the Democrats’ pleading for lower prices from these politicians as ironic.

“These senators have collectively opposed energy production, pipelines, and investment in their regions and in the United States,” says Dan Kish, senior vice president of the Washington, D.C.-

based Institute for Energy Research (IER). “It is the height of hypocrisy that they and President Biden are now asking others to bail them out of the hole they themselves dug.”

“Other nations’ leaders are serious about energy for their citizens,” says Kish. “Ours are all talk.”

The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts households that heat primarily with propane, natural gas, or heating oil could spend significantly more on their heating costs this winter. In New Hampshire, 43 percent of households use home heating oil and another 17 percent heat with propane.

Granite Staters who rely on heating oil can expect to pay up to 59 percent more this winter, the EIA reports. Some households that rely on propane could see their costs climb 94 percent over last year.

“As winter arrives, New England’s energy could be in short supply despite consumers paying among the nation’s highest prices,” says American Petroleum Institute (API) Chief Economist Dr. Dean Foreman. “Resistance to pipeline infrastructure, notably in New York, has hampered the region’s access to domestic natural gas and oil production and raised imports of costlier resources from international markets.”

If you ask Foreman, New England policymakers should focus on ensuring access to the critical infrastructure needed to deliver affordable, reliable American-made energy.

The letter to the White House was also signed by Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Angus King (I-Maine), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

Hassan supports New Hampshire joining the carbon cap-and-trade Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which, according to a study by the Cato Institute, drove up energy costs and hurt economic growth. She’s also opposed increasing the natural gas supply coming to New Hampshire and backed Biden’s decision to shut down the Keystone XL pipeline.

Hassan, Collins, and Reed say they are working to improve energy efficiency and lower heating costs for all Americans. They recently sent another letter urging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to release funds for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as swiftly and at the highest level as possible. But by opposing energy production and access, critics note, the net impact is to drive up costs for low-income families, then make taxpayers cover even more of the difference.

“This hurts all Americans, especially lower and fixed-income Americans, yet the Biden administration is continuing to pursue high spending, high regulatory climate agenda that will increase energy costs for Americans and have no meaningful impact on global temperatures by the end of the century,” says Katie Tubb, Senior Policy Analyst for The Heritage Foundation, a center-right D.C. think tank. “For example, the administration is launching an all-out regulatory assault on nearly every aspect of the natural gas, coal, and oil industries – even while those

regulations are being drafted, the administration's anti-energy posture has created considerable political risk that is having reverberations through the energy sector."

We know what the results of good energy policy can look like, says Tubb. "According to the EIA, between 2018 and 2019, average total energy costs fell 5 percent and Americans' per capita energy costs decreased in every state except California."

Advocates for increased U.S. energy production note the similarity between the senators' letter and the Biden administration's policy of shutting down energy production while asking OPEC to increase oil output.

Sununu says soaring energy costs are just a symptom of the larger problem.

"Inflation and the supply chain are the issues that are hampering us economically," he noted. "Democrats in Washington are talking about everything under the sun that doesn't pertain to this. And I think that's a giant frustration in America right now."