



BIDEN'S DRAINING OF THE PETROLEUM RESERVE

President Biden's war on fossil fuels has resulted in an insecure domestic energy supply. Because of this, Americans have experienced higher energy costs throughout Biden's tenure. To combat this, and his accordingly low approval on energy policy, Biden has tapped into our Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) more than any other president to temporarily (and artificially) lower energy prices. However, President Biden continues to delay plans to refill the SPR, leaving the U.S. at serious risk of being short on backup petroleum in the event of a natural disaster or an international crisis.¹

BACKGROUND

What is the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

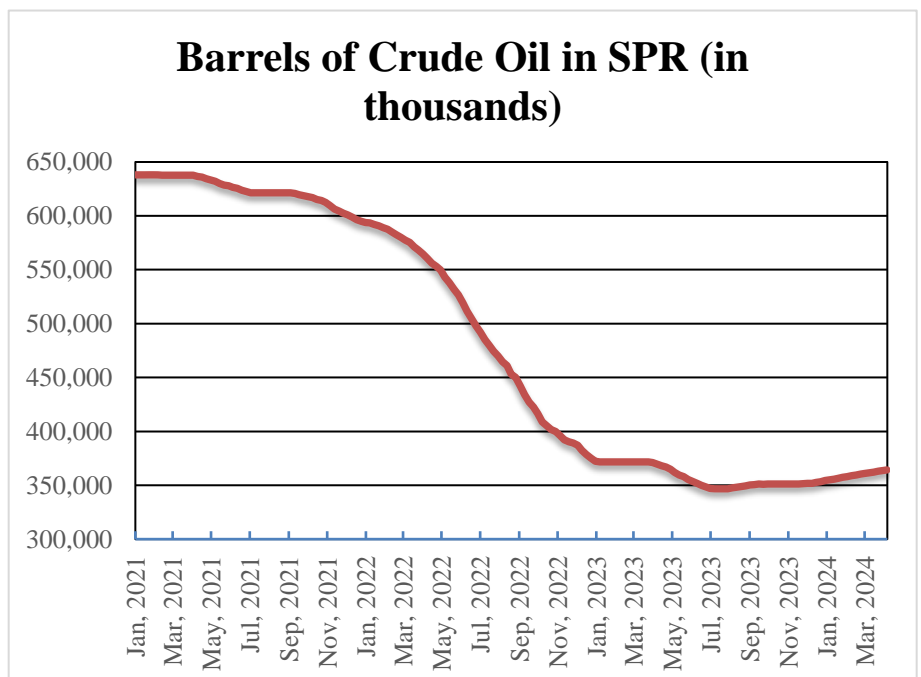
The SPR is the world's largest supply of emergency crude oil. It was established in 1975 when President Ford signed legislation declaring it to be the policy of the United States to hold reserves of up to one billion barrels of petroleum to reduce disruptions in the supply of petroleum products and to carry out obligations of the United States.² The need for this arose in the years preceding this, with Arab nations in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cutting off the oil flow to the U.S. during the 1973-74 oil embargo.³

Petroleum is an absolute necessity in America. Its uses range from fueling vehicles and heating our homes to being a basis of petrochemicals, which make fertilizers, pharmaceutical and medical products, clothing, electronics, and more. (For more, see RPC guide *Fossil Fuels in Everyday Products*).⁴

What did Biden do?

During skyrocketing energy inflation in 2022, which hit many Americans with \$5.00 per gallon gas and an over 40 percent increase in energy prices over the previous year, President Biden attempted to counteract the effects of his anti-energy policies, such as his shutting down of pipelines and moratorium on federal oil and gas leasing, by severely tapping the SPR to introduce new petroleum into the market to lower costs temporarily.^{5,6} (For more on Biden's anti-energy policies, see RPC guide *Biden's America Last Energy Policy*).⁷

In 2022 alone, Biden drained 37 percent of the SPR, with a substantial amount



going to China.⁸ He continued in 2023, causing the SPR to reach a 40-year low of under 347 million barrels, compared to the over 638 million barrels when he took office—an over 45 percent drop.⁹ The sale of crude oil from the SPR had a minimal impact on the the cost of gasoline, with prices still 52% higher than when Biden took office.¹⁰

However, the Biden administration has yet to refill it to anywhere near the levels it was when it took office. In April 2024, they yet again canceled a plan to add just 3 million barrels to the SPR, claiming the cost was too high—a direct result of this administration’s energy policy.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

- To fight soaring energy costs due to the Biden administration’s energy policies, Congress should ensure that the policies in H.R. 1 are signed into law. If the Senate doesn’t pass this package, they should be sent as single bills with policies encouraging unlocking American energy potential. (See the RPC guide *Republican Energy Plan for America*).¹¹ Some of these policies are:
 - Prohibiting a moratorium on fracking
 - Repealing restrictions on importing and exporting natural gas
 - Repealing anti-energy Inflation Reduction Act components such as the natural gas tax and the green slush fund, which appropriates \$27 billion of taxpayer money for Green New Deal projects.
- Republicans in the House should also pressure the Senate to pass H.R. 21, the Strategic Production Response Act, which would limit the depletion of the SPR until the Department of Energy submits a plan to Congress to increase the percentage of federal lands leased for oil and gas production.¹²

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¹ Thomas Catenacci. Biden admin cancels plan to refill emergency oil reserve amid high prices . Fox News.

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/biden-admin-cancels-plan-to-refill-emergency-oil-reserve-amid-high-prices>

² Strategic Petroleum Reserve. U.S. Department of Energy. <https://www.energy.gov/ceser/strategic-petroleum-reserve>

³ SPR Origins. U.S. Department of Energy. <https://www.energy.gov/ceser/spr-origins>

⁴ Fossil Fuels in Everyday American Products. House Republican Policy Committee. <https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicanpolicy.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/fossil-fuels-in-everyday-american-products-final.pdf>

⁵ Weekly U.S. Regular all Formulations Retail Gasoline Prices (Dollars per Gallon) U.S. Energy Information Administration. https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=EMM_EPMR_PTE_NUS_DPG&f=W

⁶ Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers: Energy in the U.S. City Average. FRED. <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CPIENGSL>

⁷ Biden’s “America Last” Energy Policy. House Republican Policy Committee. <https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicanpolicy.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/Biden's%20America%20Last%20Energy%20Policy.pdf>

⁸ Dan Eberhart. Biden’s SPR Drawdown Big Win for Beijing. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/daneberhart/2023/01/21/bidens-spr-drawdown-big-win-for-beijing>

⁹ Weekly U.S. Ending Stocks of Crude Oil in SPR. U.S. Energy Information Administration.

<https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=WCSSTUS1&f=W>

¹⁰ Weekly U.S. Regular all Formulations Retail Gasoline Prices (Dollars per Gallon) U.S. Energy Information Administration. https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=PET&s=EMM_EPMR_PTE_NUS_DPG&f=W

¹¹ Republican Energy Plan for American. House Republican Policy Committee. <https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicanpolicy.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/gop-energy-package-guide-final.pdf>

¹² H.R. 21 – Strategic Production Response Act. 118th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/21>