

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2202

February 27, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

I write with deep concerns regarding the Department of Energy's (DOE) recent activities involving the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), an organization with considerable documented ties to the Chinese government.

RMI, the environmental non-profit recently encouraging a ban on gas stoves, has clearly enjoyed elevated access to the Biden Administration. On February 10th, 2023, Americans for Public Trust obtained information through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) revealing the occurrence of a private meeting between yourself and the CEO of RMI, Jules Kortenhorst, in June 2021.¹ The following year in March, DOE awarded a \$4.4 million grant to RMI for a demonstration project.² DOE has continued to announce grants to RMI as recently as February 2023.³ RMI leaders have also appeared on White House visitor logs more than once in 2022, including for a meeting with National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi.⁴

Given China's active undermining of our nation's energy independence, RMI's blatant longtime connections to the Chinese government should be alarming to any member of the Cabinet. Their ties are no secret. For example, RMI has worked with the Chinese government on policies to transition away from oil and gas, and it features its only non-U.S. office in Beijing.⁵

Just last month on Twitter, you widely shared the now-disputed RMI study linking gas stove usage and childhood asthma.⁶ While you directly responded to this study with an urgent call to "fix this" by noting

¹ *REVEALED: Biden's Energy Secretary Privately Met with China-Connected Activist Group Pushing Ban on Gas Stoves*, Americans for Public Trust (10 Feb. 2023), americansforpublictrust.org/news/revealed-bidens-energy-secretary-privately-met-with-china-connected-activist-group-pushing-ban-on-gas-stoves/.

² *DOE Awards \$32 Million to Accelerate Next-Generation Building Upgrades*, Energy.gov (14 Mar. 2022), www.energy.gov/articles/doe-awards-32-million-accelerate-next-generation-building-upgrades.

³ *Biden-Harris Administration Announces Funding for Zero-Emission Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Corridors, Expansion of EV Charging in Underserved Communities*, energy.gov (14 Feb. 2023), <https://www.energy.gov/articles/biden-harris-administration-announces-funding-zero-emission-medium-and-heavy-duty-vehicle>

⁴ *White House Climate Czar Met Privately with Eco Group Pushing Gas Stove Bans*, Fox News (11 Feb. 2023), www.foxnews.com/politics/white-house-climate-czar-met-privately-eco-group-pushing-gas-stove-bans.

⁵ *Biden's Energy Secretary Met with China-connected Group Fueling Gas Stove Bans in US*, Fox News (10 Feb. 2023), www.foxnews.com/politics/bidens-energy-secretary-met-china-connected-group-funded-study-used-justify-gas-stove-ban.

⁶ Secretary Jennifer Granholm (@SecGranholm), Twitter (Jan. 4, 2023, 3:30pm) <https://twitter.com/SecGranholm/status/1610735318340075544>

policy related to transitioning Americans to electric stoves, RMI has since walked back its claims amid scrutiny. Your tweet has not been deleted as of the date of this letter. In recent weeks, the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) Richard Trumka, Jr. said a ban on gas stoves "is on the table" and your Department has proposed new energy standards that would render the majority of gas stoves on the market noncompliant.⁷⁸

Bureaucratic attempts to ban gas stoves in the United States would present an obvious and unreasonable burden on American families and businesses. For this reason, I have introduced commonsense legislation like the *Stop Trying to Obsessively Vilify Energy (STOVE) Act* to preempt any such agency proposal. Considering RMI's ties to China, agencies should be more cautious in investigating the origin of any related idea that would impose costs on American families. For this reason, I request your answers to the following questions:

1. Were you aware of RMI's connections to China prior to your June 2021 meeting with the group or prior to DOE's subsequent grants to RMI in 2022 and 2023?
2. During the Biden Administration, has RMI had contact with you or DOE staff regarding limitations on the sale, purchase, or use of gas stoves or related appliances?
3. Has DOE consulted with other agencies, including CPSC, using studies or advice from RMI?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress

⁷ *Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Consumer Conventional Cooking Products*, Govinfo.Gov (1 Feb. 2023), www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-02-01/pdf/2023-00610.pdf.

⁸ *Gas Stoves Back under U.S. Scrutiny with Proposed Efficiency Rules*, The Seattle Times (2 Feb. 2023), www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/gas-stoves-back-under-u-s-scrutiny-with-proposed-efficiency-rules/.