



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 1, 2023

Top Biden Official May Have Benefited From Killing Alaska Drilling Leases

The Biden administration continues to be plagued by revelations of impropriety, conflicting interests, and law-breaking.

Nada Wolff Culver, a prominent official within Biden's Bureau of Land Management (BLM), likely violated federal law by owning \$15,000 in bonds with energy giant ConocoPhillips at the time that she suspended three Trump-era oil drilling leases while serving as the bureau's acting director.

The revelation came by way of the watchdog group [Protect the Public's Trust](#). The suspension of the drilling leases benefited ConocoPhillips by getting its competitors out of the region. Notably, Culver's bond experienced a [1.5 percent](#) market-rate increase due to her decision.

According to Protect the Public's Trust, Culver violated the policies of the Interior Department by owning the bonds in the first place.

In a complaint that Protect the Public's Trust filed with with Interior Department inspector general Mark Lee Greenblatt, it can be seen that on April 23, 2021, ethics officials warned Culver that she and her husband could not participate in oil and gas leasing policy until she divested from any and all "prohibited investments," which included the Conoco bonds.

However, the Interior Department suspended the Alaskan leases on June 1, 2021 — [directing the firms](#) impacted to send any questions to Culver. Meanwhile, Culver didn't divest from her Conoco interests until August 16 of that year.

In their write-up, the watchdog group wrote:

Throughout this period, Ms. Culver was subject to Interior's ethics regulations that, among other obligations, precluded her from holding financial interests on Interior's "List of Prohibited Financial Interests," which in 2021 included stock and bond interests in ConocoPhillips ("Conoco").³ It appears, however, that from March 1 to August 16 of 2021, Ms. Culver retained financial interests in Conoco, despite having been repeatedly advised by the Departmental Ethics Office ("DEO") that such holdings were prohibited by Interior's ethics regulations and finally being directed by the DEO to divest herself of all financial interests in the oil and gas sector immediately. Nonetheless, and despite having agreed to make the divestitures, Ms. Culver did not sell her interests in Conoco for more than three and a half months, during which time she personally took a series of substantial actions



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pertaining to BLM's oil and gas program that may have benefited Conoco in apparent derogation of her obligations under Federal ethics law and the Department's regulations.

On June 1, the same day the leases were suspended, Conoco [publicly thanked](#) the Bureau of Land Management for paving the way for approval of its \$8 billion Willow Master Development Plan proposal.

"Although the final decision on the Willow Project is still pending, clearing the [Interior Department] review represents a very significant milestone for this project," Erec Isaacson, president of ConocoPhillips Alaska, stated, adding that "this is a great example of collaboration and thorough preparation enabling a rational, fact-based decision."

The statement wasn't lost on Culver, who sent an [email](#) the very next day, June 2, to an unknown person requesting a "good contact at Conoco" to talk about the comments.

Additionally, Culver, who now serves as deputy director of policy and programs at BLM, was found by federal investigators in August to have violated the Biden Ethics Pledge by engaging in an unauthorized meeting with her former employer while she was the agency's acting director in 2021.

Michael Chamberlain, director of Protect the Public's Trust, called Culver's actions "the most egregious example yet of the considerable disregard for ethics compliance at the Department of the Interior under Secretary Deb Haaland."

Culver's situation is simply the latest manifestation of the Washington kleptocracy. It should be no surprise that a Biden official is involved in using public office for personal profit when Biden himself has long been guilty of the same.

As *The New American* [recently reported](#), Biden's unethical ties to Communist China are becoming ever more apparent, as in the case of the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement — an important think tank for the Biden team, serving as a "home base" at which Joe Biden's advisers can find a job and collect a paycheck during the years he's out of government.

In addition to 10 classified documents being found at the think tank, it is now known that the University of Pennsylvania, and by extension the Penn Biden Center, received millions of dollars from anonymous Chinese donors in 2021.

Specifically, the university took \$51 million in foreign funding in 2021. That included \$14 million from China and Hong Kong; \$2.4 million from Saudi Arabia; and \$1 million from the Cayman Islands specifically gifted to the Penn Wharton China program.

Moreover, it has now been made public that Joe Biden was mentioned in an October 2017 email seeking to confirm a [multimillion-dollar deal](#) to send natural gas from the United States to China, as seen within correspondence found on Hunter Biden's laptop.

Culver's case is also far from the first time the Biden administration has been enmeshed in an oil-related controversy. Last year, Biden notoriously sold nearly one million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to a Chinese state-owned firm in which his son Hunter's equity company held a \$1.7 billion stake. That was at a time when sky-high gas prices were causing suffering for households across America.

For Biden and his administration, the goal of acquiring political power is clearly not to defend the Constitution, but to pad their own bank accounts — no matter how many laws they have to break in the process.



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