

Harris Tells a Fracking Howler

Editoriale

Republicans are complaining about the ABC News debate moderators' one-sided fact-checking, but why didn't [Donald Trump](#) call out more of [Kamala Harris](#)'s howlers? Consider her claim that the Inflation Reduction Act increased leases for fracking for oil and gas.

Asked why she has reversed her 2019 support for a ban on fracking, Ms. Harris sidestepped. "I was the tie-breaking vote on the Inflation Reduction Act, which opened new leases for fracking," she boasted. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin must be laughing. She is taking credit for a provision in the IRA that he wrote and the Administration has tried to sabotage.

Mr. Manchin's provision prohibits the government from holding offshore wind sales unless it auctions off a certain amount of offshore area for oil and gas. The Administration had canceled Mr. Trump's planned offshore oil and gas lease sales. Mr. Manchin's goal was to force the Administration to open up more public area for drilling. No dice.

The Administration's new five-year offshore oil and gas plan for 2024 through 2029 includes only three lease sales, which is the fewest in history and the bare minimum needed for Biden officials to achieve their offshore wind targets. Most five-year plans have included 15 to 20 sales. The Trump plan that Biden officials revoked would have held 47.

Mr. Manchin rapped the Administration's plan, while trying to put a positive spin on it by noting there would be zero offshore oil and gas auctions if not for his IRA provision. So Ms. Harris is correct in the limited sense that if Mr. Manchin hadn't insisted on the provision as his price for supporting the IRA, the Administration wouldn't have allowed any more offshore fracking.

Ms. Harris also claimed credit in the debate for “the largest increase in domestic oil production in history.” She might as well take credit for the sunrise. Since January 2021, U.S. oil production has increased by 2.1 million barrels a day, versus four million during Mr. Trump’s first three years before the pandemic caused prices to plunge and 2.3 million over his full term.

Almost all of the production increase under Mr. Biden was a bounce back from the pandemic slump. Most has occurred on private and state land in Texas’s Permian Basin, much of which has come from tapping what are known as “drilled but uncompleted wells.” These are wells that were drilled previously but not fracked, in part because of market uncertainty about demand.

Ms. Harris tried to sound like a friend of frackers by saying the U.S. has to “reduce our reliance on foreign oil.” That is this Administration’s code for subsidizing electric vehicles. Because the Administration has eased sanctions, oil production from Iran and Venezuela has increased by nearly as much under Mr. Biden as U.S. production has.

The U.S. fracking boom has taken place despite the Biden-Harris Administration, not because of it. The same will be true if she becomes President.