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March 9, 2026

William J. Wiatrowski
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20212

Dear Acting Commissioner Wiatrowski,

History is repeating itself. Crises spurred by American intervention in the Middle East in 1974, 1980, 1990, and 2003 led to price gouging at the gas pump and drains on American wallets, followed by broader economic effects as the price of energy skyrocketed. President Trump's reckless, aimless, and illegal war with Iran is driving our nation into yet another self-inflicted energy and inflation crisis. American consumers should not be subjected to shakedowns every time they fill up their cars, just to pay for Donald Trump's Middle Eastern crusade.

Unfortunately, at this moment we are flying blind. The President has neglected to provide coherent or consistent explanations for the scope and goals of his war, either to the Congress or the American people, and we have similarly received no information from the Administration on the conflict's expected duration or anticipated costs. As a result, I write to request that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) immediately undertake and publish a comprehensive analysis of the likely consumer price impacts over the next six-to-twelve months stemming from the ongoing conflict with Iran. Since U.S.-Israeli strikes started on February 28, 2026, American families and small businesses have already begun to feel the consequences at the pump, in the grocery aisle, and their utility bills. Energy costs impact virtually every economic sector, and as the disruption to global energy markets accelerates, the American people deserve rigorous, accountable projections to understand what lies ahead. BLS has historically provided nonpartisan statistical economic analyses, and I call on you to do so without delay.

The economic shock from this conflict is already severe and getting worse. Brent crude oil prices, at approximately \$72 per barrel prior to the strikes in Iran, have already spiked to around \$120 per barrel— their highest level since Trump took office.¹ Tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately 20% of the world’s seaborne oil supply passes, has effectively stalled.²

In the early stages of the conflict, gasoline prices posted their largest single-day jump since March 2022, with the national average leaping 12 cents to \$3.15 per gallon.³ In my home state of Massachusetts, the price of regular gasoline soared by 20 cents per gallon in the war’s first week and has only risen since.⁴ The entire New England region has seen similar increases.⁵ Energy analysts originally projected that gasoline prices could climb to \$3.50 per gallon or higher nationally;⁶ now, after seeing the magnitude of the war’s economic impact, major national gas analysts now forecast that prices will likely reach \$4 per gallon in the next month.⁷

The inflationary risks extend far beyond gasoline. Iranian drone strikes have forced QatarEnergy — which accounts for roughly 20% of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply — to halt production at its Ras Laffan facility, sending European wholesale natural gas prices surging by more than 50%.⁸ Natural gas is the primary feedstock for ammonia and fertilizer production globally, so a sustained shutdown would likely dramatically spike food prices. Higher diesel prices will also have profound economic effects. GasBuddy’s head of petroleum analysis has specifically flagged the increased cost of diesel— which rose to the highest level since July 2024 on March 2, shortly after the strikes — as “far more impactful to CPI numbers, to what you

¹ Rebecca F. Elliott and Joe Rennison, *Oil Prices Spike Over \$110 a Barrel, Highest Since Pandemic*, N.Y. Times (March 8, 2026), [http https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/08/business/energy-environment/oil-100-dollars-barrel.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/08/business/energy-environment/oil-100-dollars-barrel.html).

² Anniek Bao, *Middle East Conflict Poses Fresh Test to Central Banks as Oil Shock Fuels Inflation*, CNBC (Mar. 4, 2026), <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/03/04/iran-israel-us-war-middle-east-conflict-oil-gas-lng-surge-central-banks-inflation-risk.html>.

³ Andrew Dorn, *What could strikes on Iran mean for US inflation?* NewsNation (March 4, 2026), <https://www.newsnationnow.com/business/your-money/iran-us-inflation/>.

⁴ Larry Edelman, *The Clock is ticking as Trump’s war puts the US economy in harm’s way*, The Boston Globe (March 5, 2026), https://www.bostonglobe.com/2026/03/05/newsletters/trump-iran-war-economy/?p1=HP_Feed_AuthorQuery.

⁵ Gavin, Christopher, *Gas prices in New England jump by as much as 24 cents in first days of war with Iran*, The Boston Globe (March 5, 2026), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2026/03/05/metro/iran-war-gas-price-spike-new-england-ri/>.

⁶ Nathan Borney, *Gas Prices See Biggest Single-Day Spike in 3 Years as Iran War Jolts Market*, Axios (Mar. 3, 2026), <https://www.axios.com/2026/03/03/iran-war-gas-prices-oil>.

⁷ Steve Kopack, *Oil hits \$100 per barrel for first time since July 2022*, NBC News (March 8, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/markets/oil-hits-100-barrel-first-time-july-2022-iran-war-rcna262347>.

⁸ Elena Mazneva, Stephen Stapczynski, and Salma El Wardany, *Gas Prices Surge as Qatar Shuts World’s Largest LNG Export Plant*, Bloomberg (March 2, 2026), [Gas Prices Surge as Qatar Shuts World’s Largest LNG Export Plant - Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-03-02-gas-prices-surge-as-qatar-shuts-world-s-largest-lng-export-plant).

pay at the grocery store to what you pay the delivery guy.”⁹ As of March 9, GasBuddy analysts are now projecting an 85% chance that diesel prices will rise to \$5 per gallon in the next week.¹⁰

Former Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned that the conflict is putting the Federal Reserve “even more on hold” and could fuel inflationary pressures at a time when inflation already sits above the Federal Reserve’s 2% target.¹¹ Higher energy costs ripple broadly through the economy, as economists warn that higher freight costs, airline fuel bills, and distribution expenses will tighten corporate margins and drive up consumer prices across sectors.¹² American families, who are already grappling with rising inflation spurred on by the effects of Trump’s broad-based tariffs, cannot afford to be left without clear, credible economic forecasts from BLS.

BLS has both the institutional expertise and the responsibility to help the American public navigate moments of acute economic uncertainty. The Consumer Price Index, the Producer Price Index, and BLS’s sector-level price data are essential resources for understanding inflation in this country. I urge you to bring that expertise to bear immediately, and to present accurate, unfiltered evidence—regardless of pressure you receive from the Trump Administration.

I have deep concerns about ongoing political interference in what should be non-partisan offices, including the federal statistical system in general and BLS in particular. The dismissal of BLS’s former Commissioner, Dr. Erika McEntarfer, on August 1, 2025 appears to solely have been the result of BLS releasing factual jobs data that was viewed as unflattering to the Administration. Baseless firings of ethical civil servants and manipulation of data reduce trust in what should be objective economic research grounded in data and evidence, rather than overt partisanship and blind allegiance.¹³ In the face of this intimidation, I appreciate Dr. McEntarfer’s assertions regarding the quality of your leadership and personal character, and I hope you will continue to ground economic analyses in objectivity and fact--no matter how many times the President inaccurately claims that BLS’s statistics are “rigged” and pressures officials to hide, alter, or otherwise change data to suit his political purposes.¹⁴

⁹ Dorn, *What could strikes on Iran mean for US inflation?* (quoting GasBuddy analyst Patrick De Haan: diesel prices are “far more impactful to CPI numbers, to what you pay at the grocery store to what you pay the delivery guy”).

¹⁰ Kopack, *Oil hits \$100 per barrel for first time since July 2022* (citing GasBuddy analyst Patrick De Haan).

¹¹ Anniek Bao, *Middle East Conflict Poses Fresh Test to Central Banks as Oil Shock Fuels Inflation*, CNBC (Mar. 4, 2026) <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/03/04/iran-israel-us-war-middle-east-conflict-oil-gas-lng-surge-central-banks-inflation-risk.html>

¹² Aimee Picchi, *Gas Prices Are Set to Rise Amid U.S.-Israeli War with Iran*, CBS News (Mar. 1, 2026) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/gas-prices-rise-oil-prices-inflation-iran-gasbuddy/>.

¹³ Nick Niedzwiedek, *Ex-BLS chief said she was blindsided by Trump firing*, Politico (Sep. 16, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/09/16/ex-bls-chief-said-she-was-blindsided-by-trump-firing-00567852>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

It is incumbent on the Trump Administration to explain the economic consequences of its war in Iran to Congress and the public. To that end, I request that BLS respond in writing to the following requests by Tuesday, March 24, 2026:

1. Please provide updated projections for consumer price changes in the energy sector — including gasoline, home heating fuel, and electricity — over the next six to twelve months. In these projections, please assess the effect of military-related disruption to production, assuming that current levels of disruption to oil and LNG flows through the Strait of Hormuz continue.
2. Please provide updated projections for consumer food price changes over the next six to twelve months, taking into account higher energy and transportation costs, disruptions to fertilizer supply chains linked to elevated natural gas prices, and any anticipated import or export disruptions.
3. Please provide updated projections for consumer prices for goods more broadly — including household products, apparel, and durable goods — given anticipated supply chain disruptions, increased shipping costs, and higher energy input costs.
4. What methodology is BLS using to model the consumer price impacts of geopolitical energy supply disruptions?
 - a. How does BLS's current modeling account for the specific characteristics of the Iran conflict, including potential prolonged disruption to the Strait of Hormuz?
 - b. Does this methodology take into account various projected durations of the conflict?

The integrity and timeliness of BLS's work have never mattered more. American families making decisions about their budgets, their energy use, and their economic future deserve the best available government data and analysis. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Ranking Member, Committee on Small
Business and Entrepreneurship