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# Romney turns up the heat on Obama energy policies

By Tom Cohen, CNN  
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Mitt Romney speaks to Illinois voters at a pancake restaurant Friday in Rosemont, Illinois.

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**NEW:** Obama's top campaign adviser calls GOP claims to lower gas prices "snake oil talk"

Mitt Romney says two Cabinet ministers and the EPA head need to go

The Republican presidential hopeful attacks President Obama's energy policies

The president says he favors developing all energy sources to reduce foreign oil dependency

**Washington (CNN)** -- Mitt Romney escalated Republican attacks on President Barack Obama's energy policies Sunday, calling for the firing or resignations of what he labeled the "gas hike trio" of top energy and environment officials in the administration.

The Republican presidential hopeful's remarks on "Fox News Sunday" illustrated a GOP strategy to target Obama for rising gas prices as part of a campaign narrative that depicts the president as stifling U.S. production in order to boost alternative energy sources.

On Sunday, the AAA reported that the national average price for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline rose to \$3.84 for an increase of almost 17% so far this year, according to www.fuelgaugereport.com.

Polls indicate Obama may be vulnerable on the issue, with his slowly rising approval rating in recent months appearing to stagnate or drop as gas prices have spiked.

Romney appeared eager to exploit the issue Sunday following similar comments he made the night before at a campaign event in Illinois, the next major primary in the Republican presidential race to decide

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who will run against Obama in November.

"There's no question" that Obama is to blame for higher gas prices, Romney said on Fox, adding that the president wanted higher energy costs to help speed the transition from oil and other fossil fuels.

"He has selected three people to help him implement that program," Romney said of Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, "and this gas hike trio has been doing the job over the last three and a half years, and gas prices are up."

According to Romney, Obama had an "election-year conversion" and now advocates increased U.S. oil drilling as well as natural gas and coal energy development. Therefore, Romney said, the threesome of Chu, Salazar and Jackson "ought to be fired" or should "hand in their resignations."

"It's a very different policy that he's now talking about, and I hope it's a real conversion," Romney said. "Time will tell."

Obama contends that oil prices are set by a global market and there is little that any administration can do in the short term to prevent recurring price spikes, like what is happening now.

In recent weeks, the president has ridiculed Republican assertions that increased drilling could lower gas prices, saying such claims were either misinformed or deliberately misleading.

"That's not oil talk. That's snake oil talk, and the American people know the difference," David Axelrod, Obama's senior campaign adviser, told the CBS program "Face the Nation" on Sunday.

Axelrod said Obama advocates a broad energy policy that invests in clean energy alternatives while continuing oil, gas and nuclear development. When asked about Romney's claim that Obama sought higher energy costs, Axelrod called it "nonsense," noting that domestic production now was greater than any time in the last eight years.

However, Republicans including Romney and fellow presidential contender Newt Gingrich call for accelerated drilling and development of U.S. oil and natural gas reserves as a way to end U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

They criticize Obama for holding back domestic oil development and argue Obama's policies have little to do with increased production happening now.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus told the CBS program that today's increased domestic oil production was due to policies under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, rather than anything Obama has done.

"This president has shut down everything when it comes to energy independence in this country," Priebus said.

Last week, Salazar pushed back hard against that argument, telling White House reporters that such attacks by Republicans were "simply wrong."

"The fact of the matter is that we are producing more from public lands, both oil and gas, both onshore as well as offshore, than at any time in recent memory," Salazar said. "And when you look back at the year of 2009, 2010, and 2011, we've continued to make millions and millions of acres of the public estate available both on the land, as well as on the sea."

Even after the Gulf oil disaster, Salazar said, new permits have been

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issued for both deepwater and shallow water drilling and "more rigs working there than at any recent time in memory."

At the same briefing, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said that "if increasing drilling were the answer in the United States to lowering prices at the pump, we would be seeing lower prices at the pump, because under President Obama we have increased significantly domestic oil and gas production. That is a fact."

In the Fox interview Sunday, Romney also criticized the Obama administration's rejection of the Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada's tar sands development to the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Romney said the Keystone decision demonstrated bad policy by stifling job creation at the same time that the government was giving \$500 million to Solyndra, the failed solar panel manufacturer.

However, Romney's assertion misstated the timing of those events. The Solyndra loan occurred in 2009, during Obama's first year in office, while the State Department rejected a permit for the Keystone pipeline earlier this year.

The Keystone permit was turned down after congressional Republicans forced a decision as planners continued seeking an alternate route through Nebraska requested by state officials.

TransCanada, the company developing the pipeline, has said it will reapply for approval of an alternate route, and in the meantime will construct one segment of the project from Oklahoma to the Gulf Coast that doesn't require State Department approval.

Axelrod told CBS that Obama was "not hostile to transporting oil, but we have to do it in an appropriate way."

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lolitics2

Seriously, I've been hearing the term "progressive" being used in the media. Is there a difference between being a democrat vs. a progressive, or what repubs like to say a "liberal"?

0 minutes ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



cameo35

.....Everyday Mitt looks more and more like Herman Munster.....

0 minutes ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Natalie Villalobos Smith

OK, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ME ? IF I'LL BECOME THE FIRST LATINA WOMAN PRESIDENT ! I THINK I'LL BE GREAT , I WILL PROMISE YOU I WILL KEEP THE MEXICANS AWAY. AT LEAST I'M NOT BLACK..WHAT DO YOU THINK?

0 minutes ago

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tactSTL

Romney is reaching.

Has anyone pointed out the last time government did sweeping deregulations (George W. Bush administration)? We had the Enron scandal manipulating energy prices as a commodity in California, Banks able to bet against their own (customers) investments, and credit default swaps entering a black hole of deregulation that has swollen to an artificial level GREATER then the total amount of money accounted for on planet Earth.  
Explain how that helped anyone again?

Sure massive deregulation initially results in a cost-cutting savings, and a spike in GDP/profits for a private businesses especially in overtly regulated industries like energy, banking, and manufacturing (EPA going more lax). This is however an illusion, and sooner, rather than later, it is manipulated for massive, un-ignorable profits and ultimately is more damaging than beneficial. Especially when it is in consolidated industries.

This is a ploy, deregulation to a point is good is over/bureaucratic government regulations are contributing to excessive waste. However over regulation is not something that we have a big problem with, and regulation is actually healthy if used to a point. It promotes safety, standards, and a more transparent structure for those who do very bad things.

0 minutes ago

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nolimits3333

Violent crime is at its lowest level in 60 years.

1 minute ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



TomCom

that's because of Obama

0 minutes ago [in reply to nolimits3333](#)

[Like](#)



TomCom

Does Romney seem bright enough to make a decent president? He seems like he would make bad decisions over and over and over. He would embarass Americans when he travels overseas.

1 minute ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**HerbyS**

Normally this sort of attack works, but this time they look so obviously desperate that it feels childish. Gas prices might hurt Obama, but these attacks will not hurt anyone other than GOP.

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**madmoh**

Poultry feed went up. F\*%\$ Obama

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**Desidarius**

I don't believe gas prices will ever go down significantly, and I hope they stay sky high. Yeah, it hurts my pocket too, but that's the corner our civilization has painted themselves into. Fossil fuels are not the future, the quicker everyone understands that, the more time we can spend building a future based in renewable energy that will stop poisoning our planet. People like Mitt Romney, who just tell ignorant people what they want to hear, try and make believe that we can just go on operating like we've done the past century, and that's just not good enough for us anymore. Our society has developed world-changing technologies in communication, medicine, and education; and yet all that technology runs on energy that is not only limited (and running out fast) but deteriorating the environment. We need drastic CHANGE in the next several decades. What Romney is talking about are temporary solutions to a very long-term issue. Americans deserve more than temporary solutions. Whether oil comes from the middle east or from our own land, it makes no difference.

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**nolimits3333**

Yes, let's get rid of EPA.

Because clean air and water are not important.

1 minute ago 1 Like

Like Reply

**CritThin**

The Reputards seem to think so!

1 minute ago In reply to nolimits3333

Like

**Vumba4**

Hey, if Obama wants to take credit for Bin Laden, which is a joke, then he damn well takes credit for rising gas prices, which isn't a joke. It comes with the territory, correct?

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**CritThin**

No! You are confused!

0 minutes ago In reply to Vumba4

Like

**kauppily**

No.

1 minute ago In reply to Vumba4

Like

**shleucha**

\$5 gas will destroy what is left of rural economies. The poverty, domestic violence and drug problems out there are worse than in many urban areas.

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**yalishanta**

Mitt Romney is right. Why is this administration slowing us to start drilling in US reserves. We need to start drilling. We have at least 15 years of oil to exploit in the US! That will solve all our problems, come on 15 years!

We need to be able to import as much as possible of this "really cheap to extract" gas from canadian oil sands as well! That will bring the prices down.  
Oil companies are just waiting to get domestic drilling permits so they are able to get the prices down, everybody knows that!  
Come on Mitt, get rid of all of this nonsense green energy policies! We want to be able to use our SUV for 15 more years! I wish my kids could understand!

1 minute ago

Like Reply

**maestro406**

Drilling in the US would not affect gas prices.

1 minute ago in reply to vellisshanta

Like

**Norton18**

I'd go along with a pipeline to the gulf coast to carry all of Romney's ridiculous assertions that he should be president. On second thought, it might kill the fish.

2 minutes ago

Like Reply

**Guest**

What is amazing to me is that the gas price rise in the result of three things. Iran, China and India. Obama has no control over the price at the pump. I live in Oklahoma and there are new wells daily. With all of the new wells the price is still going up. We have so much gasoline in the US that we are exporting it to other countries.

If you really want to lower the cost drop the speed limit back to 55 and it would cause us to use less gas, lower insurance cost, lower cost on road repair, and save lives. Wow money, money, money. We started to drive slower and our gas gauge moves so much less these days. We are saving money and using it to have fun again. Try slowing down and you might be surprised at what happens to your pocket book. I am a republican and I say Romney has no idea what he is talking about.

3 minutes ago 1 Like

Like Reply

**gwats1957**

Hi there! My name is Mitt Romney, and I would do anything, say anything to get elected, because I know most folks don't use Google or the web to fact check what I say, or compare it to past statements. I will lie to you straight up, and make you believe that the United States is the center of the Universe, and I can get you 2.50 a gallon gas. You will believe me because you have the memory span of a goldfish, and will not remember my lies and distortions from yesterday.

3 minutes ago 2 Likes

Like Reply

**mayswell**

Google Chu's (he would be the energy sec) comments to congress about this topic. Have a nice day!

1 minute ago in reply to gwats1957

Like

**JurorNet**

No. I want \$1 per gallon like the good old days, some 30 years ago.

2 minutes ago in reply to gwats1957

Like

**maestro406**

beautiful

2 minutes ago in reply to gwats1957 1 Like

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**oronowoman**

Obama does not control the price of gas. Its based on demand. Either Mitt is either getting desperate or he really doesn't understand this policy.

3 minutes ago 1 Like

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