



# Q1 2023: Oil Companies Continue To Reap Profits & Hoard Cash

Fresh off a year of global chaos leading to [record-shattering profits](#), major oil companies and their investors seem content with maintaining the status quo. According to Climate Power's analysis of financial statements from 28 publicly-traded oil and gas companies in the first quarter of 2023:

- **\$78.37 billion** in adjusted earnings were announced through press releases touting strong quarterly profits.
- **\$53.8 billion** in stock buybacks (\$28.835 billion) and dividends (\$24.977 billion) were spent rewarding shareholders.
- **\$218.6 billion** in cash was retained on balance sheets while rolling back green spending plans.

## Holding Back Production To Pay Off Investors & CEOs

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As cash continues to pour in from consumers, oil executives are focused on taking steps to prop up their stock prices, resulting in higher compensation for themselves and [even more wealth](#) for their billionaire investors. Among the companies tracked in this report, spending on stock buybacks was \$28.835 billion, and spending on dividends was \$24.977 billion, bringing a combined total of \$53.8 billion spent funneling cash to shareholders in the quarter.

Meanwhile, providing relief to consumers by expanding supplies has clearly not been a priority. The most recent available data from the Department of the Interior showed that there were still [6,653 drilling permits](#) approved and ready to drill as of January 31, 2023. Another important measure of drilling activity, the [Baker Hughes Rig Count](#), saw U.S. drilling activity decline in the first quarter from 772 active rigs in the first week of January to 755 at the end of March.

These metrics make it clear that any supply problems in the market are the result of intentional choices by oil executives, not government policies.

## Reneging On Climate Commitments

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Oil & gas companies have taken advantage of Putin's invasion of Ukraine to generate what the Wall Street Journal described as "[a mountain of cash with few precedents in recent history](#)." At the end of the first quarter, the companies tracked in this report held \$218.6 billion in cash on their balance sheets.

Despite having plenty of cash available for new strategic investments, a [study](#) released this February found that four of the world's largest oil companies aren't meeting their promises to tackle climate

change with actual investments. Instead, they are proactively backing away from them. Earlier in the quarter, the three companies who ended up with the highest amounts of cash on their balance sheets began to make announcements pulling back from green investments:

- [Shell said it wouldn't increase spending on renewable energy](#) this year, saying their investor returns are more important.
- [Exxon announced its "retreat"](#) from one of its largest climate solutions - making biofuels from algae.
- [BP announced less ambitious targets](#) in emission cuts.

While most oil companies choose not to break out segment data on clean energy investments, filings from Shell and BP show the magnitude of their pullbacks from previous green commitments. Shell's cash capital expenditure in its renewables and energy solutions segment [dropped by more than half](#) from \$1.076 billion in Q4 2022 to \$440 million in Q1 2023. Similarly, BP's capital expenditure in its low-carbon energy segment [dropped](#) from \$577 in Q4 2022 to \$366 million in Q1 2023.



Oil And Gas Company Profits  
Amounts in millions

Company	Adjusted Earnings	Balance Sheet Cash	Stock Buybacks	Cash Dividends Paid	Stock Buybacks + Dividends
APA Corp	<a href="#">\$ 372</a>	\$ 154	\$ 78	\$ 142	\$ 220
BP	<a href="#">\$ 4,963</a>	\$ 30,433	\$ 2,448	\$ 1,183	\$ 3,631
Cheniere Energy Inc	<a href="#">\$ 3,599</a>	\$ 2,948	\$ 450	\$ 99	\$ 549
Chesapeake Energy	<a href="#">\$ 270</a>	\$ 130	\$ 54	\$ 175	\$ 229
Chevron	<a href="#">\$ 6,744</a>	\$ 15,668	\$ 3,800	\$ 2,900	\$ 6,700
ConocoPhillips	<a href="#">\$ 2,920</a>	\$ 6,974	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,488	\$ 3,188
Coterra Energy Inc	<a href="#">\$ 661</a>	\$ 973	\$ 268	\$ 436	\$ 704
Devon Energy	<a href="#">\$ 952</a>	\$ 887	\$ 517	\$ 596	\$ 1,113
Diamondback Energy Inc	<a href="#">\$ 751</a>	\$ 46	\$ 332	\$ 542	\$ 874
Enbridge	<a href="#">\$ 1,726</a>	\$ 976	\$ -	\$ 1,798	\$ 1,798
EOG Resources	<a href="#">\$ 1,578</a>	\$ 5,018	\$ 317	\$ 1,067	\$ 1,384
EQT Corporation	<a href="#">\$ 669</a>	\$ 2,127	\$ 201	\$ 54	\$ 255
Equinor	<a href="#">\$ 11,973</a>	\$ 17,915	\$ 461	\$ 2,861	\$ 3,322
ExxonMobil	<a href="#">\$ 11,618</a>	\$ 32,651	\$ 4,340	\$ 3,738	\$ 8,078
Halliburton	<a href="#">\$ 651</a>	\$ 1,879	\$ 100	\$ 145	\$ 245
Hess	<a href="#">\$ 346</a>	\$ 2,100	\$ 20	\$ 137	\$ 157
Marathon Oil Corp	<a href="#">\$ 420</a>	\$ 178	\$ 334	\$ 63	\$ 397
Marathon Petroleum	<a href="#">\$ 2,724</a>	\$ 7,960	\$ 3,180	\$ 337	\$ 3,517
Murphy Oil	<a href="#">\$ 195</a>	\$ 312		\$ 43	\$ 43
Occidental Petroleum	<a href="#">\$ 1,069</a>	\$ 1,165	\$ 732	\$ 320	\$ 1,052
Ovintiv Inc	<a href="#">\$ 450</a>	\$ 26	\$ 239	\$ 61	\$ 300
Phillips 66	<a href="#">\$ 1,965</a>	\$ 6,965	\$ 800	\$ 486	\$ 1,286
Pioneer Natural Resources	<a href="#">\$ 1,275</a>	\$ 1,192	\$ 520	\$ 1,319	\$ 1,839
Shell	<a href="#">\$ 9,646</a>	\$ 42,074	\$ 4,291	\$ 2,029	\$ 6,320
TC Energy	<a href="#">\$ 1,233</a>	\$ 3,851		\$ 735	\$ 735
TechnipFMC	<a href="#">\$ 1</a>	\$ 522.3	\$ 50		\$ 50
TotalEnergies SE	<a href="#">\$ 6,541</a>	\$ 27,985	\$ 2,103	\$ 1,844	\$ 3,947
Valero Energy	<a href="#">\$ 3,058</a>	\$ 5,521	\$ 1,500	\$ 379	\$ 1,879
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 78,370</b>	<b>\$ 218,631</b>	<b>\$ 28,835</b>	<b>\$ 24,977</b>	<b>\$ 53,812</b>

