

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 9, 2026

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Mr. Wirth, Mr. Woods, Mr. Lance,

The United States has no right to attack another country to seize its oil. President Trump has been candid that his objective in Venezuela is for the U.S. to have access to its oil reserves. In recent days, President Trump has said:

*"We're going to be taking out a tremendous amount of wealth out of the ground... We're going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars."*¹

*"A tremendous amount of money will have to be spent, and the oil companies will spend it, and then they'll get reimbursed by us or through revenue."*²

And in a social media post late Tuesday, President Trump said that *"Venezuela will be turning over between 30 and 50 MILLION barrels of High Quality, Sanctioned Oil, to the United States of America,"* a quantity that would be worth between \$1.8 billion and \$3 billion, according to the New York Times.³

When President Trump says he will pay the oil companies with revenue seized from Venezuela that he will "control," be on notice: The President of the United States has no Constitutional authority to appropriate funds to pay oil companies for doing his bidding. Only Congress has the Constitutional authority to appropriate funds. The President cannot obligate federal funds without Congressional approval, including to reimburse or subsidize corporations for private sector projects.

¹ *Trump Announces U.S. Military's Capture of Maduro*, Pentagon News (January 3, 2026) (online at <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4370431/trump-announces-us-militarys-capture-of-maduro/>)

² *Trump says the U.S. government may reimburse oil companies for rebuilding Venezuela's infrastructure*, NBC News (Jan. 5, 2026) (online at <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/energy/trump-venezuela-oil-companies-reimburse-rcna252434>)

³ *What to Know About the Venezuelan Oil That Trump Claims the U.S. Will Receive*, The New York Times (January 6, 2026) (online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/06/business/venezuela-oil-supply.html>)

Many of us are vehemently opposed to the United States “running Venezuela.” We are opposed to a United States occupation of Venezuela to seize that country’s oil assets. Your company should not expect Congress to finance or reimburse oil sector reconstruction projects, absent explicit advance approval, and Congress will scrutinize and possibly reverse any financing package proposed by the Administration without explicit Congressional approval.

We urge your company to proceed with extreme caution, to publicly affirm that it does not intend to seek or expect U.S. taxpayer dollars to support its activities in Venezuela, and to commit to ensuring full public transparency regarding any communication with Executive Branch officials related to U.S.-Venezuela policy.

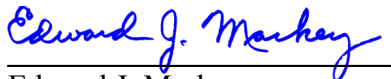
Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



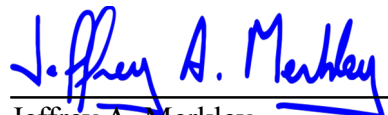
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



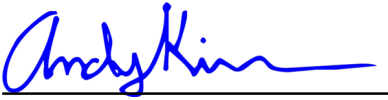
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Andy Kim", with a horizontal line underneath.

Andy Kim

United States Senator