

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write with concern that your Administration's actions toward Cuba are pushing the country toward a humanitarian crisis. The overt strategy of choking off oil imports to the island is inflicting severe hardship on the Cuban people, who rely on imported fuel for electricity, transportation, health care, and clean water. The situation in Cuba is dire. Given that Cuba poses no credible national security threat to the United States, we urge you to lift the oil embargo on Cuba immediately to prevent unnecessary human suffering and reduce the potential for a regional refugee crisis.

On January 29, 2026, you invoked new emergency powers to threaten tariffs against any nation that sells oil, directly or indirectly, to Cuba.¹ This forced Mexico, Cuba's second-largest supplier of oil, to abandon its latest oil shipment out of fear of economic retaliation.² Your Administration already halted all oil shipments to Cuba from Venezuela—which was previously the nation's largest oil supplier—through last month's illegal operation in Venezuela, seizures of oil tankers carrying Venezuelan oil exports, and unilateral intervention in the Venezuelan oil industry.³ The island's domestic production meets only a fraction of its energy needs, and Havana depends heavily on imported oil to sustain its power grid and other essential services.⁴ Furthermore, the overall U.S. sanctions regime has starved Cuba of opportunities to develop other energy resources to meet domestic demand.⁵ Now, your efforts to sever Cuba's access to oil will significantly worsen conditions on the island, as the island will run out of oil in only a

¹ Exec. Order No. 14,380, 91 FR 5085 (Feb. 3, 2026).

² James Wagner, *Trump's Threats to Cuba's Oil Suppliers Put Mexico in a Bind*, New York Times (Feb. 10, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/10/world/americas/mexico-cuba-oil.html>.

³ Reuters, *Cuba is defiant after Trump says island will receive no more Venezuelan oil or money*, (Jan. 11, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/11/trump-says-no-more-venezuelan-oil-or-money-to-go-to-cuba.html>; Konstantin Toropin and Michael Biesecker, *U.S. forces seize 7th sanctioned tanker linked to Venezuela in Trump's effort to control its oil*, PBS News (Jan. 20, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/u-s-forces-seize-7th-sanctioned-tanker-linked-to-venezuela-in-trumps-effort-to-control-its-oil>.

⁴ International Energy Agency, *Cuba*, <https://www.iea.org/countries/cuba/energy-mix>.

⁵ Korey Silverman-Roati, Daniel Whittle, Romany M. Webb, Jeffrey P. Fralick, and Lila Harmar, *Building a Clear, More Resilient Energy System in Cuba: Opportunities and Challenges*, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School (Apr. 17, 2024), https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/sabin_climate_change/220/; Ricardo Torres, *Cuba's Power Grid Nears Total Failure*, IEEE Spectrum (July 1, 2025), <https://spectrum.ieee.org/cuba-energy-crisis>.

matter of days.⁶ Cuba already faced profound economic strain and chronic energy shortages, in large part due to U.S. sanctions and restrictions that tightened during the first and second Trump administrations.⁷ This policy will deepen that crisis, leading to additional food insecurity, deteriorating access to medical care, disruptions to water and sanitation systems, and a potential wave of refugees that could further destabilize the region. Your escalation of the embargo and use of tariffs to starve a nation of critical resources are forms of economic coercion without a defensible rationale.

The Administration has framed its tariff threats as necessary to protect the American people from an “extraordinary threat” posed by Cuba “to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”⁸ But Cuba’s government and economy have struggled with sustained decline for years, in no small part due to decades of U.S. sanctions. Between 2022 and 2023 alone, an estimated ten percent of Cuba’s population left the island, and more than 600,000 Cubans sought asylum in the United States in the last five years.⁹ Cuba has not committed or threatened military aggression against the United States since the 1960s and does not possess the capacity or the will to pose a serious national security threat.

Moreover, you are escalating economic pressure despite the fact that Cuban officials have publicly stated a willingness to negotiate outstanding disputes with the United States.¹⁰ You stated that you “strongly suggest [the Cubans] make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.”¹¹ But without actual negotiation on a “deal,” it calls into question the actual aim of this blockade.¹² If diplomacy is a viable option, choosing instead to exacerbate a humanitarian crisis is both strategically unsound and morally indefensible.

The United States has a legitimate and longstanding interest in promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. But taking action that sparks a humanitarian crisis as a means of leverage is not a strategy that results in long-term success or reflects who we are as Americans. Instead, the Administration’s actions are depriving innocent Cuban citizens of basic necessities. Policies that intensify fuel shortages, cripple essential services, and deepen economic desperation risk destabilizing not only Cuba, but the broader Caribbean region.

⁶ Roque Planas, *Trump threatens tariffs on goods from countries that sell oil to Cuba*, The Guardian (Jan. 29, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/29/trump-tariffs-cuba-oil>.

⁷ Gonzalo Zegarra, *20-hour blackouts, garbage-lined streets: this is life under Cuba’s ‘war economy’*, CNN World (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/22/americas/cuba-crisis-energy-economy-intl-latam>; International Energy Agency, *Cuba*, <https://www.iea.org/countries/cuba/energy-mix>.

⁸ Exec. Order No. 14,380, 91 FR 5085 (Feb. 3, 2026).

⁹ Nora Gamez Torres, *Cuba admits to massive emigration wave: a million people left in two years amid crisis*, Miami Herald (July 24, 2024), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article290249799.html>.

¹⁰ Anna McAllister, *Cuba signals willingness to engage in dialogue as diplomatic tensions escalate with U.S. over sanctions*, CBS News (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/cuba-signals-willingness-to-engage-in-dialogue-as-diplomatic-tensions-escalate-with-u-s-over-sanctions/>.

¹¹ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Jan 11, 2026, 7:27 AM), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115876460615555838>.

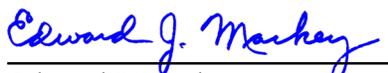
¹² Truth Social, @realDonaldTrump (Jan. 11, 2026), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115876460615555838>.

Given the seriousness of these concerns, we request that you respond in writing to the following questions by March 2, 2026:

1. What is the Administration trying to achieve with its Cuba policy?
2. Will the recent Supreme Court decision to reject major elements of your tariff policy have an impact on your policy toward Cuba?
3. What specific intelligence or threat assessment supports the Administration's determination that Cuba currently poses an "extraordinary threat" to the national security or foreign policy of the United States?
 - a. The Administration's Executive Order (EO) titled "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Cuba" suggests a national emergency is justified because Cuba aligns itself with certain U.S. adversaries. Do you assess that the over 60-year U.S. embargo on Cuba has any role in Cuba's inclination or need to build a relationship with the adversaries the EO describes?
4. Please provide any analysis conducted regarding the projected humanitarian consequences of restricting fuel shipments to Cuba.
5. Does your Administration acknowledge that this action will increase migration flows toward the United States?
 - a. Please provide any assessment regarding the effect that this policy will have on migration flows toward the United States.
6. What planning has been done to address a potential refugee surge or broader regional instability resulting from deteriorating conditions on the island?

The Cuban people deserve access to basic resources and the opportunity to live with dignity, and the American people deserve transparency and accountability regarding your Cuba policy that is on track to trigger widespread human suffering and regional instability.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern

Member of Congress