

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 6, 2026

Michael K. Wirth  
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer  
Chevron Corporation  
1400 Smith Street  
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Wirth:

According to President Trump, his Administration engaged with U.S. oil companies both before and after its illegal and unconstitutional capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and his wife. I write to seek information about any communications Chevron had with the Administration about the U.S. military operations in Venezuela, and about Chevron's future intentions in that country. The Trump administration's attack on Venezuela comes at great cost to the rule of law, our constitutional order, and the American and Venezuelan people. Congress needs to understand Chevron's role in this wrongdoing.

President Trump has long been focused on Venezuela's oil reserves. They are the world's largest, estimated at about 303 billion barrels, more than four times the amount in U.S. oil reserves.<sup>1</sup> And Venezuela's reserves are composed of "heavy oil," which the United States lacks, but which many U.S. oil refineries were built to process.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the oil itself, President Trump has repeatedly decried Venezuela's use of its sovereignty to expropriate fossil fuel company assets in 2007 under former President Hugo Chavez. In mid-December, President Trump said: "They took our oil rights — we had a lot of oil there. As you know, they threw our companies out, and we want it back."<sup>3</sup>

President Trump and his Administration lied about and concealed their plans to attack the territory of, and conduct regime change in, Venezuela, keeping the American public and Members of Congress — who have the sole constitutional power to declare war — in the dark. The only outside entities that appear to have known the truth are oil executives, including one anonymously quoted as saying: "In preparation for regime change, there had been engagement"

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, Venezuela (last updated Feb. 8, 2024), <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/VEN>.

<sup>2</sup> Jillian Ambrose, *Dense, sticky and heavy: why Venezuelan crude oil appeals to US refineries*, *The Guardian* (Jan. 5, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/jan/05/venezuelan-crude-oil-appeals-to-us-refineries>.

<sup>3</sup> Associated Press, *Watch: 'We want it back': Trump demands Venezuela return land, oil rights to U.S.*, PBS NewsHour (Jan. 3, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-we-want-it-back-trump-demands-venezuela-return-land-oil-rights-to-u-s>.

between the Trump administration and the fossil fuel industry.<sup>4</sup> President Trump himself was even clearer. According to the Wall Street Journal, approximately one month before Maduro was captured, President Trump sent a message to oil company executives to “get ready.”<sup>5</sup> Then, on January 4, he said that he spoke to oil companies “before and after” the operation.<sup>6</sup> Contradicting the President, some oil executives have denied that those talks occurred; according to a report, neither Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips, nor Chevron have yet had “any conversations with the administration about Maduro’s ouster.”<sup>7</sup> These warring depictions of your company’s knowledge of the attack on Venezuela demand clarification.

Discussions following Maduro’s capture have reportedly focused on developing the terms of engagement for fossil fuel companies, which, according to industry officials, “could include having the U.S. government signing contracts guaranteeing payment and security or forming public-private joint ventures.”<sup>8</sup> Another anonymous industry executive said: “We need some boots-on-the-ground security and some financial security” as guarantees to re-engage with Venezuelan oil assets.<sup>9</sup> On January 5, Trump promised oil companies they will “get reimbursed by us or through revenue.”<sup>10</sup>

Your ties to this Administration and its interest in promoting your profits are neither surprising nor undocumented. In the 2024 election cycle, the oil and gas industry spent \$450 million to elect and influence Donald Trump and Republicans.<sup>11</sup> In April 2024, your company participated in a Mar-a-Lago meeting with President Trump where he sought \$1 billion in campaign contributions from oil industry executives in exchange for an explicit promise that, if elected, his Administration would implement policies favorable to the oil industry.<sup>12</sup> Your

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<sup>4</sup> Ben Lefebvre, Zack Colman & James Bikales, *Trump: U.S. oil companies will return to Venezuelan fields, invest billions*, Politico (Jan. 3, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/01/03/trump-venezuela-oil-us-companies-return-00709782>.

<sup>5</sup> Collin Eaton and Alex Leary, *Trump’s Hint to Oil Executives Weeks Before Maduro Ouster: ‘Get Ready’*, Wall St. J. (Jan. 5, 2026), [https://www.wsj.com/business/energy-oil/venezuela-chevron-trump-strikes-maduro-195eb6e3?gaa\\_at=eafs&gaa\\_n=AWEtsqcqYr6Kn0Ols6wN52uQIP\\_ayBjiVKATG03cAccorgptyjebgRsZ5XI41SmX11A%3D&gaa\\_ts=695d6cc7&gaa\\_sig=nyQein3fSp\\_GeOBdBOTOjXe4peMm8NCWuAVNp65g5taNDltZypBP3-dSVIUKCux57OYX\\_Iy\\_p5qOlmQwhBU9A%3D%3D](https://www.wsj.com/business/energy-oil/venezuela-chevron-trump-strikes-maduro-195eb6e3?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtsqcqYr6Kn0Ols6wN52uQIP_ayBjiVKATG03cAccorgptyjebgRsZ5XI41SmX11A%3D&gaa_ts=695d6cc7&gaa_sig=nyQein3fSp_GeOBdBOTOjXe4peMm8NCWuAVNp65g5taNDltZypBP3-dSVIUKCux57OYX_Iy_p5qOlmQwhBU9A%3D%3D).

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Fortinsky, *Trump pushes Venezuela oil industry after Maduro ouster*, The Hill (Jan. 5, 2026), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5672735-trump-venezuela-oil-industry/>.

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<sup>11</sup> *NEW REPORT: Oil and Gas Industry Spent \$450 Million to Influence Trump and the 119th Congress*, Climate Power (Jan. 22, 2025), <https://www.climatepower.us/news/new-report-oil-and-gas-industry-spent-450-million-to-influence-trump-and-the-119th-congress/>.

<sup>12</sup> Josh Dawsey and Maxine Joselow, *What Trump promised oil CEOs as he asked them to steer \$1 billion to his campaign*, Wash. Post (updated May 9, 2024), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/05/09/trump-oil-industry-campaign-money/>.

company has enjoyed extraordinary access to the White House and has received multiple boosts to your business from this Administration.<sup>13</sup>

The American people deserve to know whether and, if so, how Chevron participated in President Trump's extra-constitutional military operation, and whether Chevron is promoting our country's involvement in regime change and global destabilization for its own financial gain. To help me better understand Chevron's role, please provide written responses to the following questions by January 15, 2026:

1. Did you or anyone at Chevron communicate with President Trump or members of his Administration about the U.S. military operations in Venezuela before they occurred? If so, please identify the dates of those communications, their nature (e.g., by telephone, text, email), the participants, and the substance. For communications memorialized in writing (e.g., texts, emails), please provide copies.
2. Did anyone at Chevron have advance notice of "regime change" operations in Venezuela? If so, who and when?
3. What are Chevron's plans for investing in and producing oil in Venezuela post-Maduro? Have you made any proposals to the Trump administration regarding Chevron's future investment in Venezuela? If so, please describe them, including whether there are any preconditions to Chevron's investment, and provide copies of any plans if they have been memorialized.
4. Do you believe that the United States or any U.S. oil company has any legal claim to Venezuela's oil, as President Trump has stated?
5. Do you believe that the Trump administration's actions in Venezuela over the past month comport with international law and respect Venezuela's sovereignty? Please explain your position.
6. How have current military actions affected your operations in Venezuela? How do you anticipate any ongoing hostilities will impact your business?

The American people deserve to understand Chevron's role in the Trump administration's unlawful and unconstitutional foreign intervention. I look forward to promptly receiving answers to my questions.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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<sup>13</sup> Benoît Morenne and Josh Dawsey, *Oil Tycoons Bet Big on Trump. It's Paying Off.*, Wall St. J. (Sept. 7, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-oil-industry-executives-policies-85eb74e6>.

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 6, 2026

Ryan Lance  
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer  
ConocoPhillips  
925 N. Eldridge Parkway  
Houston, TX 77079

Dear Mr. Lance:

According to President Trump, his Administration engaged with U.S. oil companies both before and after its illegal and unconstitutional capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and his wife. I write to seek information about any communications ConocoPhillips had with the Administration about the U.S. military operations in Venezuela, and about ConocoPhillips's future intentions in that country. The Trump administration's attack on Venezuela comes at great cost to the rule of law, our constitutional order, and the American and Venezuelan people. Congress needs to understand ConocoPhillips's role in this wrongdoing.

President Trump has long been focused on Venezuela's oil reserves. They are the world's largest, estimated at about 303 billion barrels, more than four times the amount in U.S. oil reserves.<sup>1</sup> And Venezuela's reserves are composed of "heavy oil," which the United States lacks, but which many U.S. oil refineries were built to process.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the oil itself, President Trump has repeatedly decried Venezuela's use of its sovereignty to expropriate fossil fuel company assets in 2007 under former President Hugo Chavez. In mid-December, President Trump said: "They took our oil rights — we had a lot of oil there. As you know, they threw our companies out, and we want it back."<sup>3</sup>

President Trump and his Administration lied about and concealed their plans to attack the territory of, and conduct regime change in, Venezuela, keeping the American public and Members of Congress — who have the sole constitutional power to declare war — in the dark. The only outside entities that appear to have known the truth are oil executives, including one anonymously quoted as saying: "In preparation for regime change, there had been engagement"

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between the Trump administration and the fossil fuel industry.<sup>4</sup> President Trump himself was even clearer. According to the Wall Street Journal, approximately one month before Maduro was captured, President Trump sent a message to oil company executives to “get ready.”<sup>5</sup> Then, on January 4, he said that he spoke to oil companies “before and after” the operation.<sup>6</sup> Contradicting the President, some oil executives have denied that those talks occurred; according to a report, neither Exxon Mobil, ConocoPhillips, nor Chevron have yet had “any conversations with the administration about Maduro’s ouster.”<sup>7</sup> These warring depictions of your company’s knowledge of the attack on Venezuela demand clarification.

Discussions following Maduro’s capture have reportedly focused on developing the terms of engagement for fossil fuel companies, which, according to industry officials, “could include having the U.S. government signing contracts guaranteeing payment and security or forming public-private joint ventures.”<sup>8</sup> Another anonymous industry executive said: “We need some boots-on-the-ground security and some financial security” as guarantees to re-engage with Venezuelan oil assets.<sup>9</sup> On January 5, Trump promised oil companies they will “get reimbursed by us or through revenue.”<sup>10</sup>

Your ties to this Administration and its interest in promoting your profits are neither surprising nor undocumented. In the 2024 election cycle, the oil and gas industry spent \$450 million to elect and influence Donald Trump and Republicans.<sup>11</sup> Your company has enjoyed extraordinary access to the White House and has received multiple boosts to your business from this Administration, including the approval of your plan to drill in the Willow oil field in Alaska.<sup>12</sup>

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The American people deserve to know whether and, if so, how ConocoPhillips participated in President Trump's extra-constitutional military operation, and whether ConocoPhillips is promoting our country's involvement in regime change and global destabilization for its own financial gain. To help me better understand ConocoPhillips's role, please provide written responses to the following questions by January 15, 2026:

1. Did you or anyone at ConocoPhillips communicate with President Trump or members of his Administration about the U.S. military operations in Venezuela before they occurred? If so, please identify the dates of those communications, their nature (e.g., by telephone, text, email), the participants, and the substance. For communications memorialized in writing (e.g., texts, emails), please provide copies.
2. Did anyone at ConocoPhillips have advance notice of "regime change" operations in Venezuela? If so, who and when?
3. What are ConocoPhillips' plans for investing in and producing oil in Venezuela post-Maduro? Have you made any proposals to the Trump administration regarding ConocoPhillips' future investment in Venezuela? If so, please describe them, including whether there are any preconditions to ConocoPhillips' investment, and provide copies of any plans if they have been memorialized.
4. Do you believe that the United States or any U.S. oil company has any legal claim to Venezuela's oil, as President Trump has stated?
5. Do you believe that the Trump administration's actions in Venezuela over the past month comport with international law and respect Venezuela's sovereignty? Please explain your position.
6. How have current military actions affected your operations in Venezuela? How do you anticipate any ongoing hostilities will impact your business?
7. ConocoPhillips has outstanding claims for more than \$10 billion from Venezuela.<sup>13</sup> Over the past year, how has your company interacted with the U.S. government, Venezuela government, or international arbitrators regarding these claims?

The American people deserve to understand ConocoPhillips' role in the Trump administration's unlawful and unconstitutional foreign intervention. I look forward to promptly receiving answers to my questions.

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<sup>13</sup> News Release, ConocoPhillips, International arbitration tribunal orders Venezuela to pay ConocoPhillips \$8.7 billion for unlawful expropriation of oil investments (Mar. 8, 2019), <https://www.conocophillips.com/news-media/story/international-arbitration-tribunal-orders-venezuela-to-pay-conocophillips-8-7-billion-for-unlawful-expropriation-of-company-s-oil-investments/>.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 6, 2026

Darren W. Woods  
Executive Chair and Chief Executive Officer  
ExxonMobil  
22777 Springwoods Village Parkway  
Spring, TX 77389

Dear Mr. Woods:

According to President Trump, his Administration engaged with U.S. oil companies both before and after its illegal and unconstitutional capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and his wife. I write to seek information about any communications ExxonMobil had with the Administration about the U.S. military operations in Venezuela, and about ExxonMobil's future intentions in that country. The Trump administration's attack on Venezuela comes at great cost to the rule of law, our constitutional order, and the American and Venezuelan people. Congress needs to understand ExxonMobil's role in this wrongdoing.

President Trump has long been focused on Venezuela's oil reserves. They are the world's largest, estimated at about 303 billion barrels, more than four times the amount in U.S. oil reserves.<sup>1</sup> And Venezuela's reserves are composed of "heavy oil," which the United States lacks, but which many U.S. oil refineries were built to process.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the oil itself, President Trump has repeatedly decried Venezuela's use of its sovereignty to expropriate fossil fuel company assets in 2007 under former President Hugo Chavez. In mid-December, President Trump said: "They took our oil rights — we had a lot of oil there. As you know, they threw our companies out, and we want it back."<sup>3</sup>

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Discussions following Maduro’s capture have reportedly focused on developing the terms of engagement for fossil fuel companies, which, according to industry officials, “could include having the U.S. government signing contracts guaranteeing payment and security or forming public-private joint ventures.”<sup>8</sup> Another anonymous industry executive said: “We need some boots-on-the-ground security and some financial security” as guarantees to re-engage with Venezuelan oil assets.<sup>9</sup> On January 5, Trump promised oil companies they will “get reimbursed by us or through revenue.”<sup>10</sup>

Your ties to this Administration and its interest in promoting your profits are neither surprising nor undocumented. In the 2024 election cycle, the oil and gas industry spent \$450 million to elect and influence Donald Trump and Republicans.<sup>11</sup> In April 2024, your company participated in a Mar-a-Lago meeting with President Trump where he sought \$1 billion in campaign contributions from oil industry executives in exchange for an explicit promise that, if elected, his Administration would implement policies favorable to the oil industry.<sup>12</sup> Your

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<sup>13</sup> Benoît Morenne and Josh Dawsey, *Oil Tycoons Bet Big on Trump. It's Paying Off.*, Wall St. J. (Sept. 7, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-oil-industry-executives-policies-85eb74e6>.

<sup>14</sup> Patricia Laya and Nicolle Yapur, *Exxon awarded \$77 million in claim against Venezuela in resubmitted arbitration worth \$1.4 billion*, Bloomberg (Aug. 11, 2023), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-08-11/exxon-awarded-77-million-for-venezuela-claim-worth-1-4-billion>.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator