United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 7, 2026

Mr. Michael K. Wirth
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Chevron
1400 Smith Street
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Wirth:

We write to seek information and documents from Chevron concerning your company's communications with the Trump Administration regarding recent United States military action in Venezuela and its relationship to Venezuelan oil resources and American energy policy.[1]

On January 3, 2026, the United States carried out a military operation in Venezuela that culminated in the apprehension of Nicolás Maduro, the leader of the Venezuelan regime.[2] This escalation in the use of force followed a four-month maritime campaign that began in September of 2025 and, to date, has involved at least 35 airstrikes on over 30 vessels. U.S. forces also intercepted multiple oil tankers and seized the Venezuelan oil aboard these ships.[3]

In public remarks later on January 3, 2026, President Trump explicitly linked the U.S. military operation in Venezuela to U.S. oil companies' interests. He stated that the United States would "have a presence in Venezuela as it pertains to oil" and that U.S. oil companies would "invest billions and billions of dollars" and "send[] our expertise in" to "get the oil flowing" and take "a tremendous amount of wealth out of the ground."[4] President Trump's statements, and those made subsequently by other members of his administration, related the military intervention in Venezuela to U.S. oil companies' access to Venezuelan hydrocarbons. As Secretary of State Marco Rubio told *ABC News*, the White House anticipated "dramatic interest from Western

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[1] Ben Lefebvre, Sophia Cai and James Bikales, "Trump administration asking US oil industry to return to Venezuela — but getting no takers," Politico (Dec. 17, 2025), https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/17/trump-oil-venezuela-return-00695292.

[2] Vera Bergengruen, "U.S. Captures Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro," Wall St. J. (Jan 3, 2026), https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/venezuela-strikes/card/u-s-captures-venezuelan-president-nicolas-maduro-eLnP6Y8OsfvZZ3qscvig?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtsqeC8JfdYv5o9Zm1dNAqa4kXztJN6ZAxinOAE05KM2_6SN3OEYUt-PQyMkczwhY%3D&gaa_ts=695c0239&gaa_sig=g4USXmMKddaT1hTq4MvwqXOZ4-27NUbseW2Hz7w-ch3M5BBMlsdpNemAnIJTXx5wi8UnQniL7W-taQkUugAefw%3D%3D.

[3] Shelby Holliday, Costas Paris, and Lara Seligman, "U.S. Seizes Second Oil Tanker Near Venezuela," Wall St. J. (Dec. 20, 2025), https://www.wsj.com/world/americas/u-s-seizes-second-oil-tanker-near-venezuela-386def53?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtsqc7Dquid_83bzRPfqjMllUYBBmyYE8EyAF-22BmFvCJPzp8TfuBnbOmbqyIe4s%3D&gaa_ts=695c059b&gaa_sig=lDyjrP-X3Yq-twOInAgXrOcM0YxRepVbceTOTVorrUUFf8WszEFdyoYJs0vUpMdkz4jewFc8df2SoPWCsiM4DQ%3D%3D.

[4] CNN Transcripts, "Trump Says U.S. Will Run Venezuela Following Maduro's Capture; Trump Praises Venezuela Operation, Says No U.S. Troops Or Equipment Lost. Trump Says U.S. Will Run Venezuela Following Maduro Capture," (Jan. 3, 2026), https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/cnr/date/2026-01-03/segment/01.

companies" to develop oil and gas operations in Venezuela "if given the space to do it, if given the opportunity to do it."[5]

Moreover, it appears that the administration has been discussing regime change in Venezuela for some time with U.S. oil companies. As reported by *Politico*, fossil fuel executives met with Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, other senior U.S. officials, and members of a Venezuelan opposition party in November of 2025 to discuss U.S. companies working in Venezuela after Maduro's anticipated ouster.[6] Speaking to reporters on Air Force One after the strikes, President Trump confirmed that administration officials had engaged with "all" major U.S. oil companies on Venezuela policy both "before and after" the January operation.[7] Other recent reporting suggests that the Trump Administration briefed oil companies a full 10 days before the U.S. land strikes and within a day after the strikes.[8] By contrast, the Trump Administration gave Congress's Gang of Eight no advanced notice and delayed a post-hoc classified briefing for two days after the strikes.[9]

President Trump also suggested that the U.S. taxpayer may pay for the huge expense of fixing Venezuela's aging oil infrastructure. He told *NBC News* that 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."[10] As you know, new investment by U.S. oil companies in Venezuela carries significant risks, including the enormous cost to repair Venezuela's infrastructure, the message that it would send to other countries in which you operate to play a role in carrying out President Trump's agenda in Venezuela, the ongoing and potentially long-term political instability, and the past record of the Venezuelan government seizing the assets of U.S. companies and failing to uphold the rule of law. American taxpayers cannot afford to take on these expenses.

President Trump's own statements justifying the operation in terms of access to foreign energy resources and benefits to the U.S. oil industry, reported repeated engagement between industry and government, and the suggestion that taxpayers could pay the cost of rebuilding Venezuela's oil infrastructure raise serious concerns about how the Trump Administration engaged with the oil companies prior to his decision to use military force in Venezuela. We would like to know the extent to which U.S. oil and gas companies such as yours had either advance knowledge of or

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[5] Nicholas Kerr, "Rubio predicts 'dramatic interest' in Venezuela from Western oil companies," ABCNews (Jan. 4, 2026), https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/rubio-predicts-dramatic-interest-venezuela-western-oil-companies/story?id=128889345.

[6] Ben Lefebvre, Sophia Cai and James Bikales, "Trump administration asking US oil industry to return to Venezuela — but getting no takers," Politico (Dec. 17, 2025), https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/17/trump-oil-venezuela-return-00695292.

[7] CSPAN, "President Trump Speaks with Reporters Aboard Air Force One" (Jan. 4, 2026), https://www.c-span.org/program/white-house-event/president-trump-speaks-with-reporters-aboard-air-force-one/671169.

[8] Ben Lefebvre, Zack Colman and James Bikales "Trump Admin sends tough private message to oil companies on Venezuela," Politico (Jan. 3, 2026), https://www.politico.com/news/2026/01/03/trump-venezuela-oil-us-companies-return-00709782?nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&nname=playbook&nrid=9b8d4c0a-0ac3-487a-9a50-ed6cedcc94fd&utm_campaign=RSS_Syndication&utm_medium=RSS&utm_source=RSS_Feed.

[9] Robert Jimison, "Trump Officials to Brief Top Lawmakers on Maduro Raid," N.Y. Times (Jan. 5, 2026), https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/05/world/americas/congress-venezuela-maduro.html.

[10] Kristen Welker and Steve Kopack, "Trump says U.S. government may reimburse oil companies for rebuilding Venezuela's infrastructure," NBC News (Jan. 5, 2025), https://www.nbcnews.com/business/energy/trump-venezuela-oil-companies-reimburse-rcna252434.

the ability to shape American foreign policy decisions—especially given that Congress was kept in the dark concerning the use of force until after the strikes occurred.

Accordingly, we request that your company provide the following information and documents by January 21, 2026:

1. **Engagement with the Trump Administration Concerning Business Opportunities in Venezuela.** From January 20, 2025, through the date of your response, did your company, including any of its representatives, engage in meetings with the Trump Administration during which Venezuela, Venezuelan oil assets, Venezuela-related sanctions, or potential or actual business activity in Venezuela were discussed?

    a. If yes, please provide the dates and locations of all such meetings as well as any documents, including contemporaneous notes, memorializing those discussions. If no contemporaneous or previously drafted documents exist, please provide a written summary of the subjects discussed at each such meeting.

    b. For each such engagement, please identify which party initiated the outreach and the government officials and company representatives involved, including title and affiliation.

    c. For each such engagement, please disclose whether administration officials discussed any expectations they had about your company's future involvement in the Venezuelan oil industry, any assurances or inducements administration officials may have offered, or any threats administration officials may have made in relation to your company's potential involvement, or lack thereof, in the Venezuelan oil industry.

2. **Discussions of Military Action.** For the period of January 20, 2025, through the date of your response, please describe in detail what, if anything, U.S. government officials told your company or its representatives regarding the timing or nature of potential or actual military action in or related to Venezuela. For each such engagement, please identify which party initiated the outreach and the government officials and company representatives involved, including title and affiliation.

3. **Discussions Concerning the Cost of Rebuilding Venezuelan Oil Infrastructure.** For the period January 20, 2025, through the date of your response, please describe in detail what, if anything, U.S. government officials told your company or its representatives regarding the costs associated with rebuilding Venezuela's oil infrastructure.

    a. At any point, did discussions cover the idea of having U.S. taxpayers pay for reconstruction?

    b. Please provide the dates and locations of all such meetings where such discussions occurred, as well as any documents, including contemporaneous notes, memorializing those discussions. If no contemporaneous or previously drafted documents exist, please provide a written summary of such discussions at each such meeting.

c. For each such discussion, please identify which party initiated the outreach and the government officials and company representatives involved, including title and affiliation.

4. **Document Production.** In addition to the specific documents noted above, please produce any additional documents, including contemporaneous notes, memorializing any internal corporate discussions concerning items (1) through (3). Please also produce all communications between your company and any Trump Administration office or official (including, but not limited to, the White House, Department of Energy, Department of the Interior, Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of the Treasury, National Security Council, and Environmental Protection Agency) concerning items (1) through (3), including but not limited to emails, briefing materials, talking points, calendar entries, reports, memoranda, internal analyses, and correspondence with government officials or third parties. In producing these materials, please include all relevant metadata and communications involving external advisors, retained consultants, or contracted intermediaries that reference Venezuelan oil policy, Venezuela-related sanctions, U.S. military strategy, or related matters.

5. **Ongoing and Future Communications.** On a monthly basis, please produce all documents responsive to items (1) through (4) above.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works

Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Peter Welch
United States Senator