

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0919

March 09, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear President Biden and Secretary Granholm:

As members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, we write to request information and express our grave concerns about the recent reports of your administration's secret trip to Venezuela to soften relations with the socialist dictator Nicolás Maduro amid America's energy crises.¹ Over the last decade, the Venezuelan population in the U.S. increased more than 125% to 540,000—nearly half of whom currently reside in Florida.² Most of this population growth occurred in recent years following Venezuela's economic collapse and brutal oppression that forced proud Venezuelans to flee their beloved nation searching for freedom, opportunity, and safety in the United States of America.

A once prosperous nation, Venezuela adopted a radical socialist agenda that plundered the Venezuelan people's resources, corrupted Venezuela's democratic institutions, censored independent media, and bankrupted the country. A nation once revered for its vast oil reserves, the corrupt, criminal, and socialist policies of President Hugo Chávez and later Maduro resulted in the redistribution of the country's oil wealth toward the dictatorship and its cronies. This nationalization of industries and confiscations ultimately led to massive inflation, corruption, political persecution, support of Marxist terrorist organizations such as the FARC, and the mass migration of its citizens to the United States and surrounding South American nations.

Since taking office, your administration has engaged in a relentless crusade against America's energy infrastructure, killing jobs and making us more reliant on adversaries such as the Iranians, Russians, and yes, the evil Maduro regime. This slashing of American energy capabilities and heavy reliance on foreign oil and gas resulted in a steady increase in energy prices over the past year. It is unfortunate to see your administration's refusal to take action at home to quell the pain that every American is feeling at the pump. This week alone, gas prices reached an all-time high surpassing the previous 2008 record of \$4.104 per gallon.³

We are concerned that your administration supports Maduro over Midland, the Kremlin over Colorado, and the Ayatollah over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Mr. President and Madam Secretary, emboldening our enemies and abandoning our energy industry is a recipe for disaster. Democrats famously like

¹ Goodman, Joshua. 2022. "Possible Russia Oil Embargo Drives US Outreach To Venezuela". *AP NEWS*. <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-business-europe-venezuela-cbe04e87fca44ed3815aba8dd2b65945>.

² Chavez, Juan. 2022. "Venezuelans Live Mostly In Florida And They Top Hispanic Population Growth". *Tampa Bay Times*. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/2021/09/25/venezuelans-live-mostly-in-florida-and-they-top-hispanic-population-growth/>.

³ Chavez, Juan. 2022. "Venezuelans Live Mostly In Florida And They Top Hispanic Population Growth". *Tampa Bay Times*. <https://www.tampabay.com/news/2021/09/25/venezuelans-live-mostly-in-florida-and-they-top-hispanic-population-growth/>.

to say, "show us your policies and show me your values." Well, we call on you today to show us your values by halting any plans to import from Iran, Russia, or Venezuela. Just the mere thought of reaching out to the Maduro regime is a slap in the face to the half a million Venezuelans that call America home who fled his vicious and failed socialist nation.

As your administration continues to face this mounting Green New Deal policy induced energy crisis at home, the Venezuelan community and Americans more broadly deserve to have answers to the following questions:

1. Is the Biden-Harris administration demanding the release of all American hostages currently in Venezuela as a prerequisite to a potential energy deal?
2. Has your administration approved all LNG export applications to expand our export capabilities to aid our European counterparts?
3. Will your administration continue the Trump administration's severing of diplomatic relations with the Maduro regime, while continuing to recognize the government of Juan Guaidó?
4. Is it part of your negotiations to have the Maduro government recognize Juan Guaidó as the legitimately elected interim president of Venezuela before engaging in an energy deal?
5. Does your administration plan to consult with Congress on these negotiations in real time, and will it host a briefing with Members of Congress to disclose all communications between members of our government and the Iranians, Russians, and Venezuelans regarding increased oil exports?

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans in Florida and the countless families in our nation suffering from your administration's America last energy policies, and within all applicable rules and regulations, we urge a swift response to these questions and the complete reversal of your harmful energy and foreign affairs policies.

Thanks for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to a prompt response.

Sincerely,



Mario Díaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Giménez
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Scott Franklin
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary
U.S. Department of State