

# United States Senate

April 12, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to not renew General License 44 “Authorizing Transactions Related to Oil or Gas Sector Operations in Venezuela” when it comes up for renewal on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

As you know, on October 17, 2023, the regime of Nicolás Maduro and members of the democratic opposition signed the Barbados Agreement that laid the groundwork for fair presidential elections in Venezuela in July 2024. This resulted in partial U.S. sanctions relief on the Venezuelan oil and gas sector. Since then, the Maduro regime has failed to uphold its promises and deliberately violated the boundaries of that agreement.

Opposition members have been banned from running in the upcoming presidential elections, and Venezuela’s Supreme Court has charged opposition members with unsubstantiated charges of conspiracy against the regime. The State Department further affirmed that the Venezuelan Supreme Court’s January 26<sup>th</sup> decision to disqualify democratic opposition primary winner Maria Corina Machado from running is inconsistent with the Maduro government’s commitment to hold competitive Venezuelan presidential elections.<sup>1</sup>

In November 2023, Secretary of State Blinken testified before the Senate Committee on Appropriations that the Maduro regime would “not [get] a free pass for actions they take that are in contradiction to the commitments that they’ve made to move toward free and fair elections” and that the sanctions relief provided can be “revoked very quickly if the regime has, in fact, violated the agreement that it reached.”<sup>2</sup> We encourage you to uphold this commitment to Congress and to reconsider current U.S. policy towards Venezuela.

History has proven time and time again that appeasing dictators does not work. We strongly urge you to reinstate and fully enforce all U.S. sanctions on the Maduro regime relieved as a result of the October 2023 Barbados Agreement. We must not cede American leverage by lifting U.S. sanctions while the Maduro government deliberately disregards its obligations. If the U.S. fails to

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<sup>1</sup> Venezuelan Supreme Court rulings and the Barbados Agreement – U.S. Department of State. (January 27, 2024). <https://www.state.gov/venezuelan-supreme-court-rulings-and-the-barbados-agreement/>

<sup>2</sup> A Review of the National Security Supplemental Request: Hearing | U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations. (October 31, 2023). <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/a-review-of-the-national-security-supplemental-request>

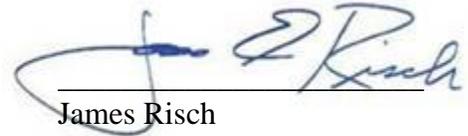
take a credible stance on ensuring free and fair elections are held in Venezuela, the prospects of a democratic Venezuela will continue to diminish, which will further embolden authoritarian aggressors such as the People's Republic of China (PRC), Iran, and Russia.

The United States must hold the Maduro regime accountable for failing to uphold its commitments. We appreciate your immediate attention on this timely matter.

Sincerely,



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



James Risch  
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



John Barrasso  
United States Senator



Rick Scott  
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts  
United States Senator