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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

January 12, 2026

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

I am writing to request confirmation that the Treasury Department will not use the Exchange Stabilization Fund (ESF) to provide taxpayer guarantees to enrich hedge funds or other financial institutions considering investments in Venezuela following President Trump's illegal military attack on the country. President Trump should not launch illegal foreign wars or deploy taxpayer resources to facilitate Wall Street war profiteering, especially as his economic policies are failing here at home.

President Trump has previously used the ESF in service of his personal political interests abroad. Last year, he bailed out Argentina's financial markets, juicing profits for global investors and bolstering his close ally's electoral prospects ahead of a critical midterm election.¹ Specifically, in October, the Treasury Department used the ESF to establish a \$20 billion swap line with the Central Bank of Argentina and purchased more than a billion dollars worth of Argentine pesos directly.² In addition, the Treasury Department reportedly tried to arrange a \$20 billion Argentine investment vehicle funded by U.S. banks, which included discussions regarding potential taxpayer guarantees.³

¹ The New York Times, "How to Become Trump's 'Favorite President': Nonstop Praise." Jack Nicas, April 3, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/03/world/americas/argentina-javier-milei-trump.html>; The New York Times, "Trump Dangles \$20 Billion Lifeline for Argentina, With Strings Attached," Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Alan Rappeport, October 14, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/14/us/politics/trump-argentina-leader-bailout.html>.

² The New York Times, "Trump Dangles \$20 Billion Lifeline for Argentina, With Strings Attached," Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Alan Rappeport, October 14, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/14/us/politics/trump-argentina-leader-bailout.html>; Bloomberg, "Bessent's Intervention in Argentine Peso Soars Past \$1 billion," Ignacio Olivera Doll, October 24, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-10-24/bessent-s-intervention-in-argentine-peso-soars-past-1-billion>

³ The Wall Street Journal, "U.S. Banks Are Hunting for Collateral to Back \$20 Billion Argentina Bailout," Alexander Saeedy and Santiago Perez, October 20, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/finance/argentina-bailout-banks-collateral-721bc2b5>.

Following President Trump’s illegal military attack on Venezuela, hedge funds and other financial institutions are reportedly exploring investment opportunities.⁴ I am deeply concerned that President Trump may use taxpayer resources to reward hedge funds and other financial institutions for supporting his effort to “run” the country and extract oil from it.⁵ Furthering these concerns, President Trump has already suggested that taxpayers will reimburse oil companies for their expenses incurred building out their operations in Venezuela.⁶ The Department of Energy also disclosed that it has already engaged banks to “execute and provide financial support for these crude oil and crude products sales.”⁷

To allay these concerns, please confirm by January 20, 2026, that the Treasury Department will not use the ESF to pad financial institution profits for facilitating the President’s unlawful scheme in Venezuela.

Sincerely,



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

⁴ Bloomberg, “With Maduro Out, Wall Street Chases After Venezuela’s Riches,” Dawn Lim, Loukia Gyftopoulou, silla Brush, and Vinicius Andrade, January 6, 2026, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2026-01-07/wall-street-eyes-venezuela-investments-oil-assets-after-maduro-ouster>; CNBC, “Venezuela chaos could lead to billions in investment opportunities, one consultant says,” Leslie Picker and Justin Papp, January 5, 2026, <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/01/05/venezuela-investment-maduro-trump.html>.

⁵ CBS News, “Trump says the U.S. will “run” Venezuela for now. What do we know about the plans?” Melissa Quinn, January 4, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-says-us-will-run-venezuela-for-now-what-do-we-know-about-the-plans/>; Fortune, “Trump says ‘we’re going to run’ Venezuela and is not afraid to put U.S. troops on the ground after Maduro’s capture,” Jason Ma, January 3, 2026, <https://fortune.com/2026/01/03/trump-us-control-maduro-rubio-venezuela-us-troops-boots-on-the-ground/>.

⁶ 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>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Energy, “FACT SHEET: President Trump is Restoring Prosperity, Safety and Security for the United States and Venezuela,” January 7, 2026, <https://www.energy.gov/articles/fact-sheet-president-trump-restoring-prosperity-safety-and-security-united-states-and>.