

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden;

We write with a deep sense of urgency to request immediate action to stabilize Cuba's energy infrastructure and provide critical humanitarian assistance. The Cuban people are currently facing widespread blackouts and an escalating energy crisis, exacerbated by the impact of Hurricane Rafael. The situation is not only causing immense suffering for the Cuban people but also poses serious risks to U.S. national security interests. If left unaddressed, the crisis will almost certainly fuel increased migration, strain U.S. border management systems, and fully destabilize the already-strained Caribbean region.

Since 2022, over 850,000 Cubans have sought refuge in the United States—the largest exodus in the island's history. The ongoing collapse of essential services, particularly electricity, has further exacerbated this exodus. The latest energy crisis threatens to trigger another unprecedented wave of migration, with hundreds of thousands more Cubans likely to seek entry to the U.S.

We respectfully urge your administration to quickly take the following actions to address this urgent crisis and safeguard U.S. interests:

1. Remove the State Sponsor of Terror Designation

We strongly recommend removing Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT) list. This will reduce barriers to oil shipments and clarify that carriers and insurers can operate legally in Cuba, facilitating access to energy and economic relief for the Cuban people.

2. Expedite Emergency Humanitarian and Technical Assistance to the Cuban People

The U.S. government should immediately provide humanitarian aid, including food and medicine, while deploying technical assistance and equipment to stabilize Cuba's electrical grid. This aid should be delivered to the Cuban people without delay, and in coordination with international partners such as the European Union, FAO, WFP, and PAHO to maximize its impact.

3. Issue Safe Harbor Letters to Address Overcompliance with Sanctions

One key barrier to increased non-government assistance to Cuba is the fear that private businesses and non-profit organizations have of running afoul of U.S. sanctions, whether or not a General License is available from Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). We strongly urge the provision of OFAC **safe harbor letters** to ensure that

humanitarian aid efforts to Cuba, including the provision of food, medicine, and technical assistance, fully comply with U.S. sanctions regulations and are protected from enforcement actions.

4. **Suspend Sanctions Impeding Aid**

We urge you to suspend sanctions that hinder the flow of humanitarian assistance, including restoring the EAR license exception to allow donations to Cuban health and humanitarian relief entities. These changes will enable quicker assistance from U.S. humanitarian organizations, religious groups, and private citizens to the Cuban people.

5. **Facilitate Energy Infrastructure Repair and Modernization**

The U.S. should fast-track the export of critical equipment needed to repair and upgrade Cuba's energy grid. In addition, lifting Cuba-specific restrictions on oil and LPG exports will help prevent a total grid collapse.

Regardless of the Cuban government's stance, it is imperative that the U.S. government demonstrates a willingness to aid the Cuban people directly. The Cuban government's frequent attempts to blame the U.S. for the island's problems should not deter us from offering the assistance necessary to alleviate suffering of the Cuban people and prevent further regional destabilization.

The escalating energy crisis in Cuba presents not just a humanitarian concern but a serious national security challenge for the U.S. If left unaddressed, the situation risks further destabilizing the Caribbean region, increasing migration flows, and straining U.S. border management systems, while strengthening the hand of malign actors in the Western Hemisphere. Acting swiftly to provide humanitarian and technical support will not only alleviate immediate suffering but also open avenues for broader diplomatic engagement. **This engagement can extend to critical issues such as the release of political prisoners, human rights, and improved governance, building a foundation for more constructive dialogue between the two countries.**

We understand that absent action from Congress, executive actions on Cuba are subject to reversal. That should not deter us from acting to avert further suffering and damage to United States interests. Even temporary relief can save lives and permit the Cuban people a chance to insulate themselves and their families from further vulnerability. We urge your administration to act swiftly to implement these measures and mitigate the growing crisis in Cuba while advancing U.S. interests in the region.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



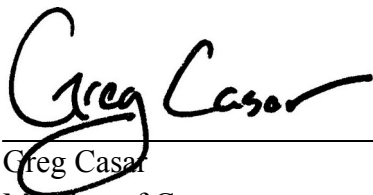
Joaquin Castro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Western
Hemisphere
House Committee on Foreign
Affairs



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



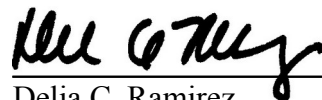
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



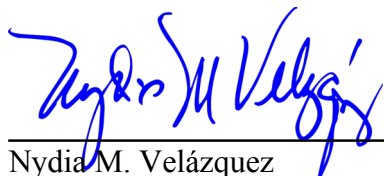
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



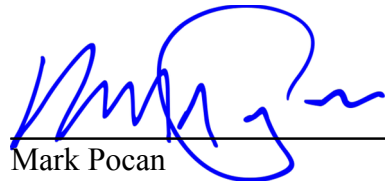
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



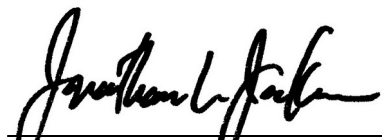
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager Dove
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress