

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As the nation recovers from a cyber terrorist attack on the Colonial Pipeline that reportedly originated in Russia, we have strong objections to your decision to waive sanctions for Nord Stream 2AG and effectively ensure the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. These sanctions focused on a one-time communist intelligence officer in the former Soviet-controlled East Germany and close crony of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The completion of Nord Stream 2, which was slowed during the Trump Administration, will be a gift to Putin and his efforts to increase geopolitical influence in Europe. Waiving sanctions for Nord Stream 2 “because it’s almost completely finished” is the wrong message to our allies and partners and undermines our credibility and global leadership. This action, which will send more Russian natural gas to Europe, also puts U.S. resources at a distinct competitive disadvantage, costing American jobs and reducing America’s geopolitical influence.

For four years, congressional Democrats obsessed over unfounded claims of Russian influence over Trump Administration policies. Democrats would have quickly called for an investigation had President Trump waived sanctions on a friend of Putin that also resulted in making American resources less competitive, increased Russian global influence, transported dirtier Russian fossil fuel to our allies in Europe, and increased global greenhouse gas emissions.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary of State Antony Blinken recognized the national security implications of Nord Stream 2 when he told a Senate committee, “I am determined to do whatever we can to prevent that completion.”¹ However, waiving sanctions is the opposite of doing “whatever we can do to prevent that completion” and raises serious concerns about the commitments your Administration makes before Congress and to our allies.

Furthermore, given your open hostility to domestic pipelines like the Keystone XL pipeline, which also was a top priority for our Canadian allies, it is baffling that you are willing to green-light Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline. The Keystone XL pipeline would enhance our energy security and create job opportunities for Americans. Lifting these sanctions, however, prioritizes Russian energy over American energy and Russian jobs over American jobs.

In addition, it makes no sense to favor higher-emitting Russian natural gas over the more carbon-friendly American liquified natural gas (LNG) to meet rising global demand. According to the Department of Energy’s National Energy Technology Laboratory, Russian natural gas exported to Europe has a life cycle greenhouse gas emissions profile 41 percent higher than American LNG exported to Europe.² If Europe switched its current supply of natural gas from dirtier Russian natural gas to U.S.

¹ Blinken, Antony, “Nomination of Hon. Antony J. Blinken To Be U.S. Secretary of State Part I” *Govinfo*, (January, 2021) <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-117shrg43890/html/CHRG-117shrg43890.htm>

² “Life Cycle GHG Perspective on Exporting LNG from the U.S. 2019 Update” *National Energy Technology Laboratory*, (September 2019)

LNG, global emissions would be reduced over 70 million tons each year. The completion of Nord Stream 2 will only increase this emissions disparity.

The recent cyber attack on the Colonial Pipeline is another reminder of long-standing efforts by Russia to undermine American production and transport of energy. In discussing the attack, you noted that “we do have strong reason to believe the criminals who did the attack are living in Russia.”³ But this is not the first discovery of Russian efforts against American energy. In a 2018 report, the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology determined:

“As the threat of American energy continues to grow, so does the Kremlin’s incentive to influence energy operations in Europe and the United States. Moreover, as they have demonstrated, the Kremlin will use any and all tools at their disposal to preserve Russia’s dominant energy status.”⁴

A 2018 Democratic staff report from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee highlighted the meddling of the Russian government in opposing natural gas from non-Russian sources and includes a reference to reports of NATO officials exposing Russian intelligence agencies for providing “covert support to European environmental groups to campaign against fracking for natural gas thereby keeping the EU more dependent on Russian supplies.”⁵

Unfortunately, it is not just the Russians looking to undermine American energy and American jobs. At every turn, your Administration continues to seek action that will result in killing American projects and pink-slipping American workers. America needs a different response at a time when our nation is still recovering from a terrorist attack on the Colonial Pipeline and when states in New England have had to resort to importing Russian natural gas because of a lack of pipeline capacity. Even Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm admitted that using a pipeline is “the best way” to transport fuel. We can only hope that your support for pipelines connecting Russia and the European Union will translate into support for similar projects in the United States that enhance energy security and create American jobs.

We urge you to rethink your action and fully implement the Congressionally mandated sanctions against all responsible parties and actors to permanently stop completion of Nord Stream 2.

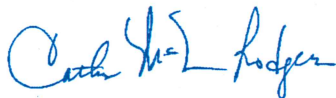
Sincerely,



Garret Graves
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Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress

³ <https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/biden-taskforce-colonial-pipeline-hackers-russia-operations-return>

⁴ House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Majority Staff Report. “Russian Attempts to Influence U.S. Domestic Energy Markets by Exploiting Social Media,” March 2018

⁵ Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Minority Staff Report. “Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security,” January 2018

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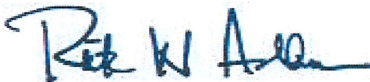
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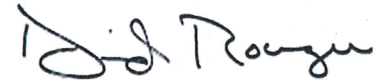
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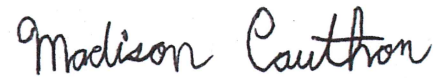
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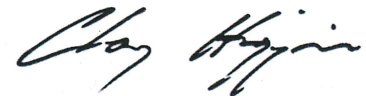
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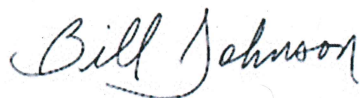
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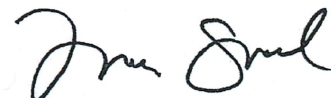
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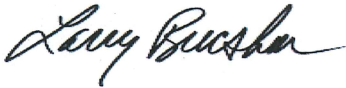
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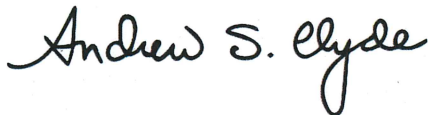
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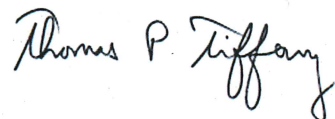
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