

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 3, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

Multiple press stories<sup>1, 2</sup> have reported that you and your aides took several flights on private or military aircraft to conduct taxpayer-funded official, as well as unofficial, business. According to the reports, this includes a \$12,000 charter flight from Las Vegas, NV to Kalispell, MT this past June aboard a plane owned by oil and gas executives, as well as other flights that give the appearance that you are mixing political gatherings and personal destinations with official business. We are asking that you immediately disclose the details of this flight and other privately chartered flights you may have taken.

Abuse of taxpayer money has so far been a problem for the Trump administration. This specific misuse of funds is even more troubling considering that commercial airlines run multiple daily flights between Las Vegas and Kalispell and charge as little as \$300. What's worse, the private plane used for June's flight is reportedly owned by the executives of a Wyoming-based oil-and-gas exploration firm, part of an industry whose permitting process you are tasked with overseeing. Furthermore, these privately chartered flights appear to coincide with events held by political benefactors and speeches before private entities that share a personal connection with you.

Given the critical need for transparency when taxpayer dollars are being used, we are requesting that you immediately disclose the full details for all your privately chartered flights. This includes the costs associated with each flight, the owners of each plane used, who was on each flight, and documentation of the approvals for all flights.

The American people deserve the right to know how their tax dollars are being used. As the steward of our public lands, it is imperative that the concerns of the oil and gas industry do not

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2017/09/28/59533ed8-a4b8-11e7-ade1-76d061d56efa\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.798187d8d09f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2017/09/28/59533ed8-a4b8-11e7-ade1-76d061d56efa_story.html?utm_term=.798187d8d09f)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/28/ryan-zinke-charter-military-planes-interior-243280>

receive greater influence than do those of the American people. Additionally, it is our view that taxpayers should not foot the bill for privately chartered flights when commercial options are available.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Nanette Diaz Barragan  
Member of Congress


  
Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

CC: Office of the Inspector General


  
Raul M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

  
Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

  
Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress


  
Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress


  
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

  
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress

  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

  
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

  
Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress


  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

  
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress


  
Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress




Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



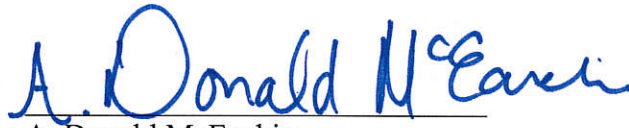
David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



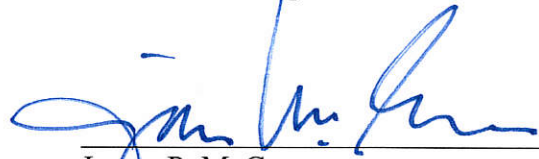
Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress