



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4305

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen,

I respectfully request a thorough investigation into foreign influence, financial involvement, and election interference by several environmental groups in the United States, including the Sea Change Foundation, the Sierra Club, the Sunrise Movement, League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, and others. Numerous reports have confirmed Russia's extensive efforts to interfere in our government, perpetrated through environmental groups such as these, who take shelter behind their non-profit status and donor anonymity.

We are now experiencing the results of unchecked foreign interference to manipulate Americans' opinions about pipelines, fossil fuels, fracking, and climate change. The Treasury Department has a responsibility to the American people to shed light on the growing role environmental non-profit organizations have in undermining our national security and American energy independence.

Both Congress and the media have long noted that many environmental groups receive large sums of money from an organization called 'Sea Change Foundation,' a proven front group for foreign financing, funded by offshore hedge funds in Bermuda. In fact, in 2017, the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology identified Russian-funded social media advertisements actively targeted the U.S. energy sector, particularly fracking, leading up to the 2016 U.S. election.

Many tax-exempt organizations receive foreign funding for research or programming, but the environmental groups in question are not acting as mere think tanks or research organizations. These groups actively lobby Congress for legislative action, support political affiliations, and promote policy. They have also been known to organize and pay operatives to disrupt American energy operations and election processes.

While it is not illegal for tax-exempt organizations to receive funding from foreign countries, the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) stipulates that any foreign-funded organization engaged in political activity must register as a foreign agent. Environmental groups that receive money

from Sea Change or other foreign-funded organizations, who then use those funds to target American energy interests, should disclose the source of their funding and potentially register as foreign agents. These groups are clearly engaging in politics at best and operating at the behest of foreign actors at worst.

Russia has a long history of successfully manipulating American industries and institutions for its benefit. We cannot allow Russia to continue undermining and threatening our energy industry in the way they destroyed our manufacturing industry. America's future and national security are at stake – we must protect our resources and promote energy independence.

I hope your investigation will provide Congress and the appropriate law enforcement entities the opportunity to hold bad actors accountable and end foreign adversaries' influence in our energy sector.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance Gooden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lance Gooden

CC:

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
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