

April 29, 2026

The Honorable Jamieson Greer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508
Dear Ambassador Greer:

As our nation deals with spiking gasoline, diesel, and fuel prices caused by President Trump's reckless war in Iran, I am writing to urge you to refrain from using the newly announced Section 301 investigations to impose tariffs on oil and energy imports from allied and partner countries.

As you well know, I strongly disagree with the administration's approach to trade policy, including the illegal tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), many of the actions taken under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, and the new "balance of payments" tariffs imposed under Section 122. It is also clear that these new Section 301 investigations stretch well beyond any Congressional authorization and are simply a sham meant to replace tariffs struck down by the Supreme Court, regardless of what actual trading practices take place in other nations. However, despite many missteps, so far, the Administration has broadly exempted oil and gas imports from tariffs.

It is therefore concerning that as the nation deals with skyrocketing fuel prices costing Americans billions of dollars per week, the recent Section 301 investigations explicitly appear to target energy products from partner nations with threats of new taxes.^[1] For example, the action published in the Federal Register for the 301 investigation criticizes Norway and Malaysia for exporting too many fuel and oil products, evidence of so-called excess capacity, because they maintain a trade surplus in goods.^[2] A number of the sixteen economies subject to the excess capacity investigation including Norway, Japan, and South Korea, are among the United States' most important liquified natural gas (LNG) trading partners and allies. Canada, a major supplier of crude oil to the United States, also maintains a substantial energy trade surplus with our country and is a target of the new 301 actions. President Trump previously imposed tariffs on Canadian oil and gas products in early 2025.

^[1] <https://ustr.gov/about/policy-offices/press-office/fact-sheets/2026/march/fact-sheet-ustr-initiates-section-301-investigations-structural-excess-capacity-and-production>

^[2] <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/2026/USTR%20301%20FRN%20Industrial%20Excess%20Capacity%20Final.pdf>

Levying tariffs on products like crude oil raises costs for American refiners, petrochemical manufacturers, utilities, and transportation networks. These costs are passed directly to households and businesses across the country in the form of higher prices. It is important to note that American refineries are often specifically configured to process heavier foreign crude grades that complement domestic oil production. California refineries, which provide most of the transportation fuel used in Nevada, use both domestic sources as well as foreign crude from diverse countries such as Canada, Brazil, Ecuador, and Guyana. President Trump has already previously illegally imposed tariffs on products from all these countries, including up to 50% on Brazilian products. Targeting these sources of petroleum products, an implied threat in USTR's investigatory materials, with new taxes would send prices even higher for Nevadans while harming domestic production.

President Trump's ill-conceived war in Iran has caused skyrocketing prices at the pump for Nevadans. The last thing Nevadans need is to pay even more taxes on fuel and energy products from friendly countries that are refined and processed in the United States. I urge you to back away from the language in the current 301 investigation that implies any trade deficit in oil products is, by definition, the result of an unfair trading practice and refrain from placing any additional tariffs on oil products we rely on in the United States.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator