



One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

I write because concerns have been raised with the Committee regarding the state of rule of law in Belize and the potential implications for U.S. strategic interests, American investments, and the bilateral relationship. While Belize remains a democracy and an ally, I would appreciate the Department's assessment of recent investor disputes involving compulsory land acquisition to determine whether these issues warrant closer U.S. attention.

Belize's investment climate warrants particular attention. The State Department's own 2025 Investment Climate Statement notes that U.S. and other foreign investors have cited lack of transparency, land insecurity, undue influence by politically powerful stakeholders, and corruption as impediments to doing business in Belize. The same report notes that the judiciary remains underfunded and under-resourced, resulting in frequent adjournments, delays, and a significant backlog of cases. Key accountability mechanisms are also not functioning as intended—the Auditor General's report on government spending continues to be significantly delayed, with parliamentary review years behind schedule. Against this backdrop, disputes such as those surrounding the Stake Bank Island cruise port project, which involves compulsory acquisition proceedings and competing ownership claims, underscore why Belize must ensure its legal institutions and business environment are strong enough to give investors confidence that their rights will be protected. I would like to understand the Department's current assessment of whether these issues pose a systemic risk to American investors and businesses operating in Belize.

These questions also carry a strategic dimension. Belize is one of a dwindling number of nations that recognizes Taiwan over the People's Republic of China, making it a valuable partner in

countering Beijing's diplomatic offensive in the hemisphere. Challenges to rule of law in Belize could create vulnerabilities that the PRC may seek to exploit—a pattern already observed in nations that have switched recognition from Taipei to Beijing. I believe it is prudent for the Department to evaluate whether current conditions in Belize pose risks to this alignment.

I request that the Department:

- Assess the current state of rule of law, judicial independence, and property rights protections in Belize, with particular attention to whether the investment climate for American businesses has deteriorated and what factors are driving investor disputes in the country.
- Evaluate whether governance deficiencies in Belize create strategic vulnerabilities that the PRC could exploit to advance its diplomatic offensive in the hemisphere, including risks to Belize's continued recognition of Taiwan.
- Detail engagements with the Government of Belize to reinforce the importance of judicial independence, transparent governance, and a predictable investment climate.

The United States has a direct interest in a stable, well-governed Belize. Effective oversight requires that the Committee have a clear picture of the rule-of-law environment in countries where U.S. interests are at stake. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Mast
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee