

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

I write today to call on you to personally reimburse the American taxpayer for the failed renovation of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

For weeks, Americans have watched a national embarrassment unfold on the National Mall. Under the guise of an "emergency," your Administration bypassed competitive bidding processes to rush a renovation of the iconic Reflecting Pool. You said you wanted to paint the pool "American flag blue" in time for a July 4th photo-op. What's unfolded since has been a complete disaster.

Today, the Reflecting Pool is a fluorescent green swamp of algae, and the expensive blue sealant is already peeling off the bottom in sheets. This was not a result of vandalism but your administration's incompetence.

Federal records show that a \$1.7 million contract for a water purification system was handed to a company owned by John J. Cafaro, your Mar-a-Lago neighbor and major donor who has pumped tens of thousands of dollars into your political activities. Another \$14.7 million no-bid contract went toward installing the ill-fated blue sealant. Shoddy work, a missed deadline, and more than \$16 million of taxpayer dollars are gone – all while Americans struggle to afford gas, groceries, and housing.

Americans work hard for their money. When they pay taxes, they expect those dollars to fix roads, support schools, and protect our public lands. They do not expect to bankroll failed presidential vanity projects.

If you want a blue Reflecting Pool for a photo-op, you should pay for it yourself.

I also urge Congress to immediately investigate the contracting and procurement decisions that created this disaster. We must follow every taxpayer dollar that was spent, subpoena every communication that led to these no-bid contracts, and ensure that those who defraud American taxpayers are held fully accountable.

The Reflecting Pool belongs to all Americans. The bill for this fiasco should only belong to you, Mr. President.

Sincerely,



John W. Hickenlooper
United States Senator