

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

We appreciate continued support in recent years for the Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs account, Conventional Weapons Destruction (NADR-CWD) subaccount. However, additional resources are needed, and we are concerned about allocations to country-specific landmine and cluster munition clearance programs. Decreased levels of support will delay progress of life-saving demining and ordnance clearance programs for which U.S. support remains critical.

Amid the conflict in Ukraine, additional funding is urgently needed to provide emergency explosive clearance support in-country, given the extensive contamination. Reducing support for addressing U.S. legacy ordnance in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia as a region also would contradict the United States' responsibility to clear deployed ordnance, and curtailing U.S. assistance to other programs would leave impoverished communities vulnerable to the dire consequences of landmines.

For the FY25 appropriation, we respectfully request that you consider including the following language in the appropriations bill or report:

The Committee supports \$290 million for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs, including humanitarian demining, and encourages country allocations at the following levels:

- 1. Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia allocated \$80,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs.*

The Committee recommendation also includes additional funds above the prior year's level for programs in Sri Lanka, Angola, and Zimbabwe, and sustained support for demining activities in Ukraine.

Ukraine already contained significant landmine and explosive contamination in the eastern region before the recent conflict. Now, an estimated one third of the country is facing far greater levels of unexploded bombs, including in major population centers, that will threaten civilians for years to come. The risk is particularly acute as civilians move throughout the country. Increased funding is urgently needed to enable the elimination of these deadly devices as soon as possible. Ukraine's recovery will require extensive clearance operations to rehabilitate its agricultural and energy sectors, amongst others.

Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia remain heavily impacted by U.S. cluster bomblets and other explosive hazards. Laos is considered the most heavily bombed country in history, suffering an estimated 50,000 casualties from explosive remnants of war. Cambodia, which contains

additional significant landmine contamination has suffered over 65,000 casualties from explosive hazards since 1979. In Vietnam, at least 105,000 casualties from explosive threats have been recorded. More resources are needed to remove these deadly items, demonstrate continued resolve to removing U.S. legacy ordnance, and strengthen diplomatic relations. An appropriation of \$80 million in FY25 would expedite ongoing clearance efforts and demonstrate positive U.S. leadership in the region.

Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war ended in 2009. U.S. funding was crucial in jump-starting and continuing a demining capacity that allowed more than 280,000 displaced people to return home and rebuild schools, hospitals, roads, and railways. Thousands of people await clearance so that they can return to their land. In FY25, strong support is needed to keep Sri Lanka on track to be landmine impact free in the near future, a remarkable accomplishment for a country so recently at war.

When Angola's Civil War ended in 2002, it was the most mined country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that over 80,000 civilians have been injured or killed by mines since 1975. U.S. assistance has directly cleared over 116,837 acres of hazards and destroyed over 111,000 landmines since Angola's demining effort began in the 1990s. In FY25, increased support is essential to saving lives, enabling further development of the Lobito Corridor, and supporting conservation-development efforts near the headwaters of the Okavango Delta.

Zimbabwe is one of the most highly-mined countries in the world. The former Rhodesian military laid unusually dense, unfenced minefields along the border with Mozambique and Zambia. Today, these minefields separate communities from hospitals and schools, devastate local livestock, and block access to valuable water sources. Increased U.S. funding in FY25 is critical to supporting a nation-wide demining program that clears tens of thousands of mines per year and is on track to achieve mine-free status in the near future.

Continued U.S. leadership in demining will promote effective and efficient programs that save lives, promote economic development, facilitate stability, and expand American influence.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



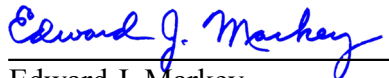
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator





Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator




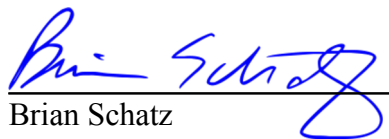
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United States Senator


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United States Senator


Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

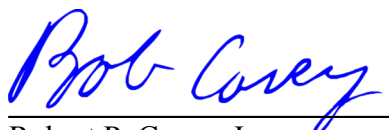

Tammy Duckworth
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Brian Schatz
United States Senator

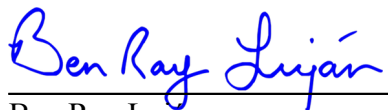

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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



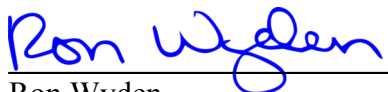
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



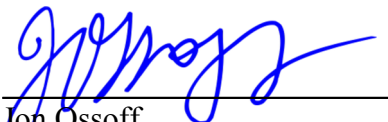
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator




Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



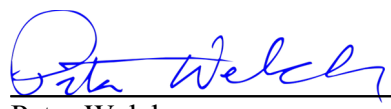
Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



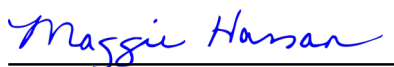
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator




Jack Reed
United States Senator




Peter Welch
United States Senator



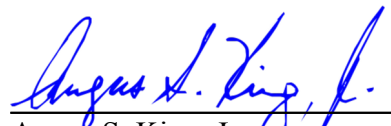
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator




Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



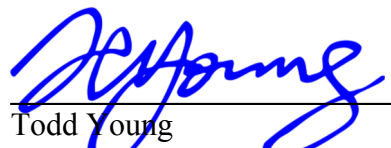
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United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator