

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2023

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 increased 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 FY24 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.*
- 2. Nagorno Karabakh allocated \$2,000,000 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 continued support for demining activities in Ukraine.*

Ukraine already contained significant landmine and explosive contamination in the eastern region before the recent conflict. Now, the country is facing far greater levels of unexploded bombs in major population centers that will threaten civilians for years to come. The risk will be 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.

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 FY24 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 200,000 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 FY24, 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 800 minefields and destroyed over 108,000 landmines since Angola's demining effort began in the 1990s. In FY24, increased support is essential to saving lives 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 FY24 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.

The recent conflict in Nagorno Karabakh resulted in enormous levels of contamination by cluster munitions, rockets, and other explosive ordnance. These hazards are still present near homes, and litter farms and streets – presenting a grave humanitarian risk. Further, the removal of explosives is critical to continuing to rebuild infrastructure decimated during the conflict. An allocation of \$2 million in FY24 will allow ordnance removal efforts activities to continue and ensure families can return to their livelihoods without fear of explosive threats.

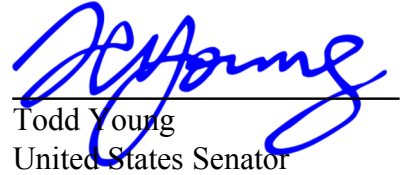
Continued U.S. leadership in demining will promote effective and efficient programs that save lives, promote economic development, facilitate stability, and expand American influence.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

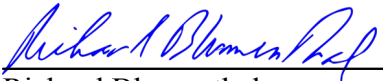
Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Todd Young  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



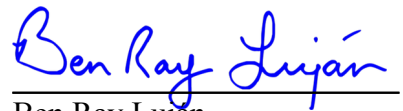
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



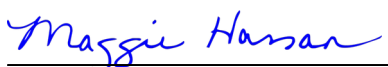
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



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Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



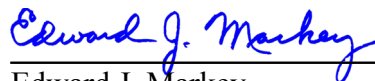
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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



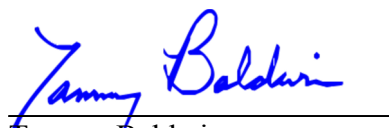
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



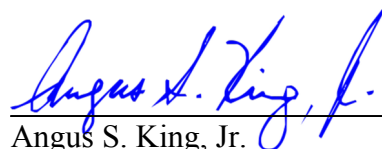
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



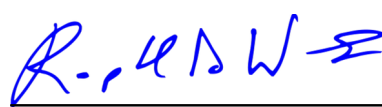
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



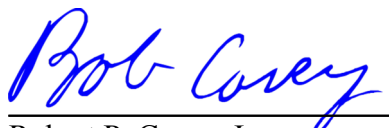
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



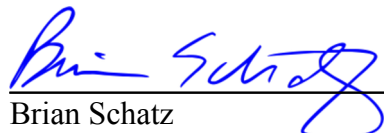
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



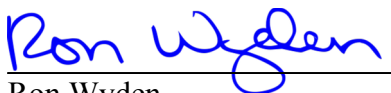
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



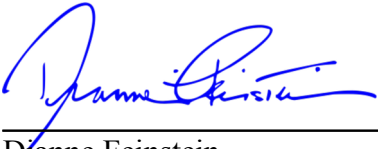
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

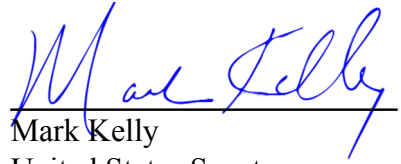


Jon Tester  
United States Senator



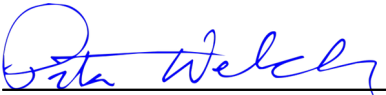
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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



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Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



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Peter Welch  
United States Senator



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator