

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, I request that you include full funding to ensure that Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology, such as fentanyl scanners are available, installed and fully operational at our ports of entry.

These fentanyl scanners are critical to stopping dangerous fentanyl from entering our country through our ports-of-entry. As noted by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), “In 2014, illicit fentanyl was basically unknown to CBP, with just 22 pounds intercepted in the first bust. Since then, the amount has skyrocketed each year, with the latest amount seized at the border and ports of entry topping more than 27,000 pounds from October 2022 to the end of September 2023.”¹ Non-Intrusive Inspection technology like the one that is already being used at the Mariposa Port of Entry in my District is helping address this ever-growing problem. However, recent reports indicating that fentanyl scanners are sitting unused in warehouses because Congress has not appropriated funding to install them is incredibly troublesome and must be immediately addressed.²

Far too many of our states and constituents are being impacted by the fentanyl crisis that is one of the most dangerous and lethal drugs in our nation’s history.³ According to DHS, more than 90% of fentanyl interdicted is stopped at ports of entry where cartels attempt to smuggle it through, primarily in vehicles driven by U.S. citizens. It is clear enhancing screening and staffing resources for our ports of entry is a primary way we can combat this issue. When our Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel have the technology and resources to inspect commercial

¹ <https://www.cbp.gov/frontline/cbp-america-s-front-line-against-fentanyl>

² <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/border-fentanyl-scanners-unused-congress-provided-no-money-rcna141432>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/11/03/fentanyl-opioid-epidemic/>

and private vehicles for illicit contraband as they enter the U.S., lives are saved. Congress has directed DHS to ultimately scan 100 percent of cargo and vehicles entering the U.S. for contraband, drugs, and other illicit items. For DHS to fulfill this obligation, it needs to have adequate funding now and into the future.

Congress has already included millions of dollars for NII systems to improve scanning of vehicles and cargo entering the U.S. in appropriation requests. It is vital the final FY24 budget address and remaining need for the installation and operation of fentanyl scanners in our ports of entry so we can urgently close any gaps in our detection systems.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress