

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

Thank you for your dedication to fostering a secure Israel and a stable Middle East. We share your concerns and appreciate your commitment to finding solutions to the many challenges that have plagued Israel's security for decades.

In your effort to build peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and to further peace negotiations between their leadership, we urge you to prioritize the issue of water. Despite the many disagreements among the parties, water is an issue of mutual interest, and one that has seen great progress in recent months. Israel recently agreed to double water sales to Gaza, and both the Israeli and the Palestinian Water Authorities have agreed to a new framework for developing water infrastructure and services in the West Bank. Further, Israel's global leadership in sea water desalination has the potential to bridge gaps with its many water insecure neighbors and build diplomatic bonds with strategic allies within the Gulf region and beyond.

Additionally, progress on water is critical to the health and security of Israel. Poor infrastructure and political instability continue to hinder the Gaza water and sanitation sector. Only 10% of Gaza's population has access to safe drinking water, and it is estimated that all of Gaza's groundwater will be undrinkable without prior treatment within twelve months. Additionally, access remains as low as 25-30 liters/person-day in many areas of the West Bank (compared with the US average of 375 liters/person-day). Given that the sewage discharged from Gaza to the Mediterranean often ends up on Israeli shores, poor availability of water and sewage treatment services poses health and environmental risks to Israelis.

In fact, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources Minister Steinitz have, over this last year, recognized this water and national security threat and requested urgent action from the international community to address this situation. Most recently, Major General Yoav Mordechai serving as the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories for the Israel Defense Forces wrote to international organizations and entities, including to United Nations Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov, urging them to address the impending humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. He argued that to prevent the situation from deteriorating, projects must be implemented to address the lack of drinkable water, electricity deficiencies and compromised infrastructure.

We recognize the many threats that Israel faces from its neighbors. As such, we praise and support your commitment to creating a more peaceful and stable Middle East and a more secure Israel. The security and health of the people of Israel and the safe access to water and sanitation services for all people are both major priorities for the United States and the American people. As you work on issues related to Middle East peace, we urge you to make water a focal point of your conversations. You have strong partners and allies within Congress on these efforts and we look forward to your response.

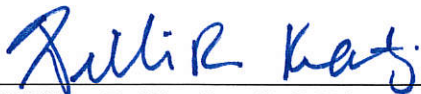
Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)
Member of Congress



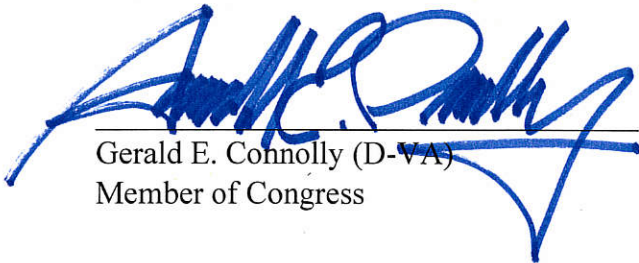
Ted Poe (R-TX)
Member of Congress



William R. Keating (D-MA)
Member of Congress



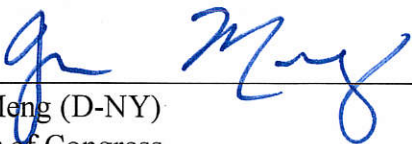
Jackie Walorski (R-IN)
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)
Member of Congress



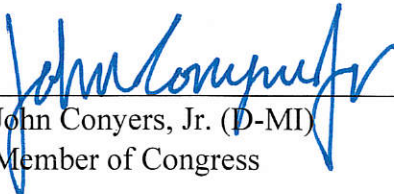
Tom Marino (R-PA)
Member of Congress



Grace Meng (D-NY)
Member of Congress



Blake Farenthold (R-TX)
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI)
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert (R-WA)
Member of Congress



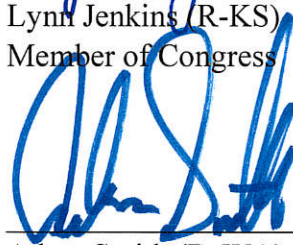
David N. Cicilline (D-RI)
Member of Congress



Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman (D-CA)
Member of Congress



Adam Smith (D-WA)
Member of Congress

CC: Jason Greenblatt
Special Representative for International Negotiations

Jared Kushner
Senior Advisor to the President of the United States

Nikki Haley
United States Ambassador to the United Nations