

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to call attention to ongoing enforcement gaps concerning Iranian petrochemical and petroleum sales, and call for you to enable the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) office to seize Iranian oil and gas shipments. In 2020, the Treasury Department acknowledged "Iranian petrochemical sales remain a key revenue source for the Iranian regime, which is used to finance the regime's destabilizing agenda of support to corrupt regimes and terrorist groups . . ." Specifically, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) – Quds Force, an arm of the Iranian regime and a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, continues to sponsor attacks on U.S. citizens and servicemembers, as well as our partners and allies. Enforcement of sanctions against Iranian petrochemical and petroleum sales will defund terrorists' intent on harming the United States and our partners.

Despite several additional sanctions issued against Iranian petrochemical and petroleum sales over the past year, the volume of Iranian oil exports from Iran from 2021 to 2022 increased by 35%, approximately 430 million barrels of oil, evading sanctions. HSI, the lead federal agency for oil sanctions enforcement and interdiction, has been unable to seize an Iranian oil shipment for over a year. Despite several credible leads, HSI's enforcement has been curtailed by policy limitations within the Treasury Executive Office for Asset Forfeiture (TEOAF) who administers the Treasury Forfeiture Fund (TFF).

Since the 2019 activation of HSI's enforcement program, it has seized nearly \$228 million in Iranian crude and fuel oil linked to the IRGC – Quds Force. When HSI seizes and processes Iranian oil, 75% of seizure revenues are allocated to the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund. It is unacceptable that a U.S. government program, which makes the United States and its allies safer, provides funds to remediate the victims of terrorism, and generates income for the United States in a cost-effective manner has been allowed to languish. Lack of action has not been driven by a lack of resources within the TFF. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Accountability Report for the Treasury Department's Forfeiture Fund, it is reported that at the end of FY21, there was an unobligated balance of \$286.55 million, following reductions and all other estimated future expenditures. Furthermore, in FY22, there was an obligated balance of \$70.915 million following all reductions and other costs. The failure to support HSI's Iranian oil seizure and disruption operations in FY22, despite available funds, is a policy choice that must be reversed.

As you are aware, TFF’s strategic intent is “to emphasize and monitor high impact forfeitures . . .” and that such mandatory funding authorities emphasized by the fund include “expenses associated with Joint Operations, Investigative Expenses Leading to Seizure, and Asset Identification and Removal Groups.” We request that you direct TFF to ensure, in accordance with TFF’s stated goal, that HSI Iranian Oil Seizures are supported and fully-funded for the remainder of FY23, in addition to other priorities supported by TEOAF.

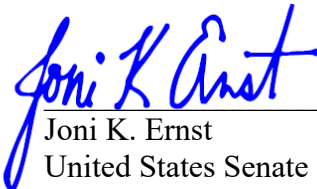
In addition, we request, no later than May 15, 2023, the following:

1. A briefing explaining why HSI’s Iranian Oil Seizures were not funded in FY22, including by using remaining unobligated balances from FY21;
2. An explanation of why there continues to be no funding available for interdiction and seizure activities for credible leads related to enforcing Iranian sanctions;
3. A national security assessment of the additional risk to U.S. citizens and servicemembers, as well as our partners and allies, resulting from the lack of enforcement of sanctions on Iranian oil sales supporting the IRGC; and
4. A strategy on actions that would ensure that all credible HSI investigations and leads related to enforcing sanctions have funding and financial support.

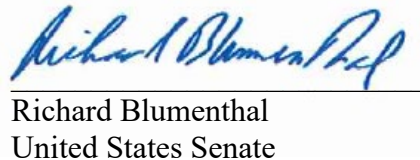
United States sanctions should be enforced to the fullest extent of the law. As Iranian oil sales continue to rise, and the IRGC continues to target U.S. citizens and servicemembers, including inside the U.S., it is imperative that we use all available government assets to limit the activities of the Iranian regime.

We look forward to your response, the briefing, and your swift action on this matter.

Sincerely,



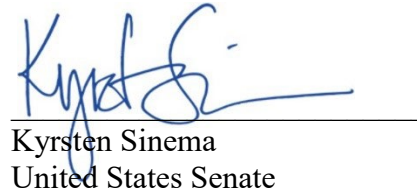
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senate



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate



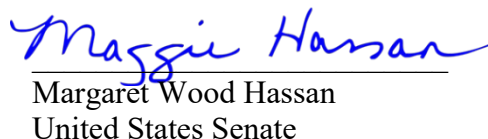
Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senate



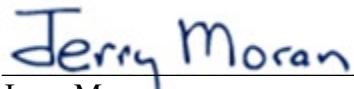
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senate



Marco Rubio
United States Senate



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senate



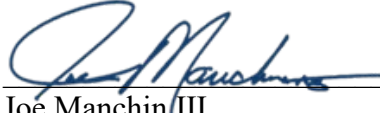
Jerry Moran
United States Senate



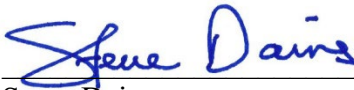
Ron Wyden
United States Senate



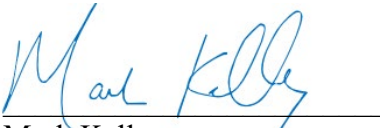
Ted Cruz
United States Senate



Joe Manchin III
United States Senate



Steve Daines
United States Senate



Mark Kelly
United States Senate

cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
The Honorable Janet Yellen, Secretary of Treasury
The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security