

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 22, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In 2014, President Obama announced a new policy prohibiting United States production and acquisition of anti-personnel landmines, as well as their use outside of a possible future conflict on the Korean Peninsula. That policy was the product of extensive consultation within the Inter-agency, including the Department of Defense, and with the Congress. It reflected a recognition that the U.S. military had not used anti-personnel mines in combat since 1991 during Operation Desert Storm. It was also a response to the fact that landmines, which are indiscriminate by design and in effect, pose grave dangers to civilians and U.S. troops. In addition, and in furtherance of President Clinton's challenge to the international community at the United Nations in 1994 to rid the world of these weapons, President Obama set a U.S. goal of joining the Mine Ban Treaty, which entered into force in 1999 and has been ratified by 164 nations including all of our NATO allies. However, in January 2020, President Trump reversed the Obama policy.

We are writing to urge you, as a first step, to reinstate the Obama policy, and by doing so reaffirm the United States as a leader in the global effort to reduce the carnage caused by anti-personnel mines. We further urge you to direct the Pentagon to expeditiously review its plans for the defense of the Republic of Korea and provide a classified report to you and the Congress describing the options for defending the Republic of Korea with alternatives to anti-personnel mines, and of finally putting the United States on a definitive path to accede to the treaty – an important U.S. foreign policy goal announced by President Clinton and reaffirmed by President Obama – by 2024. In addition to the more than two decades during which the Pentagon was directed to develop alternatives to anti-personnel landmines, this would provide three more years to finalize plans for such a transition.

We urge you to put America on a path to make this longstanding goal a reality. If the United States takes these steps it will be welcomed around the world, it will enhance our credibility in seeking to stigmatize the use of anti-personnel mines, and it will put added pressure on other governments to renounce them. It is the right thing to do for our country, for the world, and for our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



JACK REED
United States Senator



SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator



LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
United States Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator



CHRIS MURPHY
United States Senator



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
United States Senator



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



DARREL ISSA
Member of Congress



ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress