

JOSH STEIN
ATTORNEY GENERAL



March 19, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building, 2433
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Hart Senate Office Building, 322
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Russell Senate Office Building, 317
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell,

As a leader in North Carolina's efforts to combat the fentanyl crisis, I urge Congress to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with the resources needed to stem the tide of illicit fentanyl flowing across our borders – including the approximately \$300 million needed to install already-purchased equipment to detect fentanyl in vehicles entering the United States.

As Acting CBP Commissioner Troy Miller told NBC News, most fentanyl entering the country comes across the border in vehicles. Indeed, more than 95 percent of fentanyl seized at the border arrives in personal vehicles.ⁱ

New technology can help CBP stem the flow of fentanyl and other deadly drugs, but only if it is deployed. The new technology, known as Non-Intrusive Inspection, or NII, would enable CBP to X-ray a higher percentage of cars and trucks using massive drive-through screeners at the border.ⁱⁱ

Considering the urgency of this task and the promise of this technology, I was dismayed and disheartened to learn that some of this vital equipment – equipment that has already been purchased with taxpayer funds – has yet to be deployed simply because Congress has failed to provide the funding that CBP needs to install the equipment. According to NBC News, funds to install the screeners were in bipartisan border security legislation that Congressional Republicans blocked.ⁱⁱⁱ

As more than 150 Americans die each day from fentanyl and other synthetic opioids,^{iv} this is no time to play politics with border security. Too many lives are at stake.

It is past time for Congress to appropriate the funds the CBP needs to stop the flow of these deadly drugs, including the approximately \$300 million needed to install fentanyl-detection technology.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request. Please feel free to reach out to my Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Steve Mange, at smange@ncdoj.gov or 919-716-6415.

Sincerely,



Josh Stein
Attorney General

ⁱ NBC News, “Scanners that spot smuggled fentanyl at the border sit unused because Congress hasn’t provided the cash to install them,” March 5, 2024, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/border-fentanyl-scanners-unused-congress-provided-no-money-rcna141432>

ⁱⁱ NBC News, “Scanners”; see also U.S. Customs and Border Protection, “Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) Technology,” available at https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nii_factsheet_2.pdf; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, “CPB: America’s Front Line Against Fentanyl,” available at <https://www.cbp.gov/frontline/cbp-america-s-front-line-against-fentanyl>

ⁱⁱⁱ NBC News, “Scanners”; Associated Press, “Senate Republicans block bipartisan border package,” February 7, 2024, available at <https://apnews.com/article/congress-ukraine-aid-border-security-386dcc54b29a5491f8bd87b727a284f8>; U.S. Sen. John Tester, letter to Congressional leaders dated March 7, 2024, available at <https://www.testersenate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024-03-07-Letter-to-Appropriators-on-Border-Tech-Installation-Funding-in-FY23.pdf>

^{iv} U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fentanyl Facts,” available at <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fentanyl/index.html>