Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Visclosky:

We appreciate the Subcommittee's leadership in including $47.5 million for joint U.S.-Israel efforts designed to improve subterranean tunnel detection in the FY 2018 Defense Appropriations Bill and respectfully request the subcommittee include robust funding in its FY 2019 bill to continue this vital joint program (PE 0603122D8Z / Combating Terrorism Technology Support).

The subterranean threat to the State of Israel, in particular the prevalence and sophistication of tunnels along both its southern and northern borders, has been a concern for many years, but more recently has become a pressing strategic threat. These tunnels are not simply holes dug into the ground. They are sophisticated networks and in some cases, are lined with concrete, include electricity, communications systems and ventilation. These tunnels have been used to launch rockets, stockpile weapons, and smuggle arms and contraband, as well as for deadly terrorist attacks and penetrating inside Israeli territory. In 2006, Hamas used a tunnel to kidnap Israel Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit, and during the 2014 Gaza conflict, Israel destroyed 32 tunnels—14 of which crossed into Israel for the purposes of cross-border attacks. Palestinian terrorist groups have largely rebuilt their tunnel infrastructure, and Hezbollah in Lebanon is undertaking similar efforts. In recent months, Israel has successfully detected a number of cross-border tunnels from Gaza using these new technologies being developed as a result of this critical cooperation.

Our own nation faces similar threats. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, ISIS has used subterranean passages to smuggle weapons, avoid detection, ambush troops and launch tunnel bomb attacks, and North Korea is believed to maintain a complex network of tunnels leading into South Korea. Joint U.S.-Israel cooperation is needed now more than ever to ensure the availability and operation of technology to detect and destroy this subterranean threat. U.S.-Israel counter-tunnel collaboration advances U.S. interests by saving lives, preventing conflict escalation, protecting our closest ally in the region, and enhancing our ability to detect tunnels. We urge you to include

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

robust funding in your FY 2019 Defense Appropriations Bill for this important and cost-effective program, and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER
Member of Congress

DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress

LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress

RANDY WEBER
Member of Congress

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress

KEVIN BRADY
Member of Congress

RUBEN J. KIHUEN
Member of Congress

DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress

DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
Member of Congress

A. DONALD MCEACHIN
Member of Congress

LEE ZELDIN
Member of Congress

ROBIN L. KELLY
Member of Congress

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress

JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

KATHY CASTOR
Member of Congress

CLAUDIA TENNEY
Member of Congress

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
Member of Congress

RO KHANNA
Member of Congress

MIKE COFFMAN
Member of Congress

BRENDAN F. BOYLE
Member of Congress

JOE WILSON
Member of Congress

DON BACON
Member of Congress

JIM BANKS
Member of Congress

TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

ADAM KINZINGER
Member of Congress

PAUL COOK
Member of Congress

ERIC SWALWELL
Member of Congress

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Member of Congress

FILEMON VELA
Member of Congress

CAROL SHEA-PORTER
Member of Congress

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

PETER ROSKAM
Member of Congress

DARREN SOTO
Member of Congress

TED W. LIEU
Member of Congress

JODY HICE
Member of Congress

RAUL RUIZ
Member of Congress

MARK DESAULNIER
Member of Congress

GLENN GROTHMAN
Member of Congress

JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress

JACKY ROSEN
Member of Congress

THOMAS R. SUOZZI
Member of Congress

SALUD CARBAJAL
Member of Congress

JIM LANGEVIN
Member of Congress

MATT GAETZ
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress

DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.
Member of Congress

MARTHA MCSALLY
Member of Congress

GENE GREEN
Member of Congress

SANDER LEVIN
Member of Congress

JOHN RATCLIFFE
Member of Congress

ANN MCLANE KUSTER
Member of Congress

NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress

ROB BISHOP
Member of Congress

JAMIE RASKIN
Member of Congress

TED POE
Member of Congress

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress