



**Mike Morrison** | Sheriff

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Office (509) 667-6851 | Fax (509) 667-6860

08/26/2023

Citizens of Chelan County,

I am writing to express my unwavering support of our regions multi-jurisdictional task force (MJTF) and to address the concerns raised in a recent bipartisan congressional letter sent to Washington State Governor Inslee. In the mentioned letter members addressed the State's plan to reduce Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) funding for drug task forces state wide.

As you know, our region, and specifically our county, has been significantly impacted by the proliferation of dangerous drugs, particularly fentanyl. The efforts of our task force have been instrumental in combating this crisis, and our dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities cannot be overstated.

Our task force has consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in addressing the drug epidemic that has amplified within our county and the surrounding areas. Their collaborative approach, sharing of resources and expertise across jurisdictional boundaries, has proven to be a vital tool in our fight against drug trafficking and abuse. Removing dedicated funding would undoubtedly jeopardize our mission and destabilize the region.

To proactively address this potential funding gap, we have already taken steps to seek additional financial support through other federal channels. However, the availability of such funds is limited and not guaranteed. In tandem with this effort, we have initiated discussions with our county commissioners to secure additional funding for our task force.

It is crucial that our task force maintains dedicated funding to continue its crucial work in keeping dangerous drugs off our streets while providing avenues towards rehabilitation. I extend my appreciation to Congress Members Larsen, Strickland, Newhouse, DelBene, Schrier, McMorris Rodgers, Gluesenkamp Perez, and Kilmer for transcending party lines to address a matter that transcends all boundaries.

As we move forward, your Chelan County Sheriff's Office remains resolute in our commitment to this cause. Our shared goal is to ensure that the safety of Chelan County families remains a top priority. We thank you for your continued support and dedication to our agency. Together, we shall continue to strive for a safer and more secure future.

Respectfully,

Mike Morrison

Chelan County Sheriff

Undersheriff  
Dan Ozment



Chief of Operations  
Ryan Moody



Chief of Patrol  
Seth Buhler



Chief Civil Deputy  
Kim Oglesbee



Executive Assistant  
April Moore

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 10, 2023

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are concerned that the State's plan to reduce Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) funding for multi-jurisdictional task forces, or MJTFs, will undermine local initiatives to combat fentanyl and other dangerous drugs in Washington communities. MJTFs are essential tools to help local communities fight the drug epidemic, and removing dedicated funding threatens their ongoing mission.

For the last seventeen years, Byrne JAG has been a stable source of funding for MJTFs in Washington, enabling them to carry out operations, purchase new equipment and hire personnel. Eliminating Byrne JAG funding for MJTFs — without first guaranteeing an alternative funding source — could prove disastrous for Washington.

MJTFs in Washington need more, not fewer, resources to overcome unprecedented challenges, including record-breaking drug trafficking across the U.S.-Canada border. In February, monthly drug seizures reached the highest levels of the last three years with more than 27,600 pounds of illegal drugs confiscated at the border.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a total of 559,396 fentanyl pills were seized by the Whatcom Gang and Drug Task Force in 2022, significantly up from 142,877 pills in 2021 and 20,050 pills in 2020.<sup>2</sup> MJTFs need dedicated funding to continue keeping fentanyl and other drugs off Washington streets.

While we commend the Washington Department of Commerce's recent announcement to distribute unused Byrne JAG funds from prior years to support MJTFs through June 30, 2024, these task forces must have long-term fiscal security. To better understand the State's approach to supporting MJTFs, we request answers to the following questions:

1. What is the long-term plan to fund MJTFs?
2. Are there alternative state level funding sources for MJTFs?
3. Does the State plan to apply for any other federal funding sources for MJTFs?
4. Will the Department of Commerce's Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force Assessment include outreach to and representation from each MJTF in the state?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent inquiry. We look forward to continuing to work together to keep Washington families safe from fentanyl and other dangerous drugs.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics>

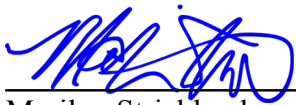
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article272101182.html>

Sincerely,



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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



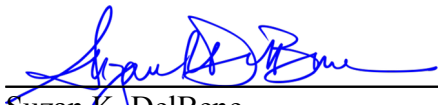
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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



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Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



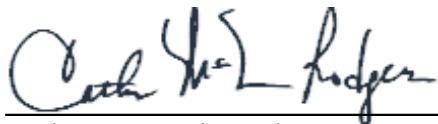
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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



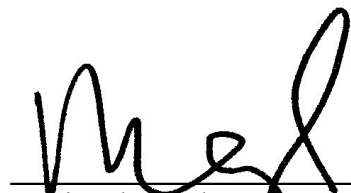
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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



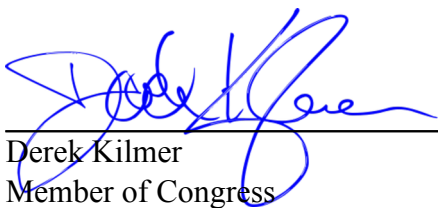
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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



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Marie Gluesenkamp Perez  
Member of Congress



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Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress