

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

October 22, 2018

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR
MARGARET E. DAUM, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Mr. McAleenan:

Nearly one year ago, I wrote to request information about the actions that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is taking to prevent opioids from crossing the United States border.¹ Based on information provided in response to that request, the minority staff of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee released two reports on the challenge that opioid trafficking poses to border security agencies.² These reports determined that the opioid epidemic places disproportionate demands on officers at ports of entry and that staffing shortages at ports of entry may be compromising opioid interdiction efforts.³ In addition, these reports found that across CBP, fentanyl seizures are dramatically increasing, placing additional strain on both Port Officers and Border Patrol Agents.⁴

While the opioid crisis continues to plague American communities, recent reports suggest that across the country, and in in my home state of Missouri, the abuse of methamphetamine is on the rise.⁵ According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, most methamphetamine consumed in

¹ Letter from Ranking Member McCaskill and Chairman Johnson to Kevin McAleenan, Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection (Nov. 6, 2017).

² Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Combating the Opioid Epidemic: Intercepting Illicit Opioids at Ports of Entry* (May 10, 2018); Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Combating the Opioid Epidemic: The Interception of Illicit Opioids by the Border Patrol* (May 23, 2018).

³ Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Combating the Opioid Epidemic: Intercepting Illicit Opioids at Ports of Entry* (May 10, 2018); Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Combating the Opioid Epidemic: The Interception of Illicit Opioids by the Border Patrol* (May 23, 2018).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Meth making a comeback, but it's not your neighbors cooking it anymore*, St. Louis Post Dispatch (July 2017) (www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/meth-making-a-comeback-but-it-s-not-your-neighbors/article_c26aafd7-0604-54ce-9c7a-559305865e44.html);

the United States is produced in Mexico and then smuggled across the Southern border.⁶ Additionally, Mexican-produced methamphetamine is higher in purity and lower in price than domestically manufactured methamphetamine.⁷

Given the demands that the opioid epidemic continues to place on CBP personnel, I want to ensure that CBP has adequate resources to meet both the opioid epidemic and the growing threat of methamphetamine. To better understand the scope of this problem and CBP's efforts to prevent methamphetamine from entering the country illegally, I request the following information:

1. The number of methamphetamine seizures each year, by month between January 1, 2012 and November 1, 2018. For each seizure, please provide the amount seized, the method of transport, the location of seizure, and if known, the intended destination of the seizure.
2. A description of any trends that CBP has identified that are affecting CBP's ability to detect illicit methamphetamine shipments and how CBP adapts to meet these emerging threats.
3. Recommendations for how Congress can help ensure that CBP has the resources necessary to stop these dangerous substances from entering our country.

I request that you provide this information as soon as possible, but in no event later than November 12, 2018.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please ask your staff to contact Caitlin Warner of the Committee Minority Staff at Caitlin_Warner@hsgac.senate.gov. Please send any official correspondence to Rina Patel at Rina_Patel@hsgac.senate.gov.

Meth, the Forgotten Killer, Is Back. And It's Everywhere, New York Times (Feb. 14, 2018) (www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/us/meth-crystal-drug.html).

⁶ Drug Enforcement Agency, *2017 Domestic Methamphetamine Threat Assessment Key Findings* (2017) (www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/2017%20Domestic%20Methamphetamine%20Threat%20Assessment%20Key%20Findings.pdf).

⁷ Drug Enforcement Agency, *2017 Domestic Methamphetamine Threat Assessment Key Findings* (2017) (www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/2017%20Domestic%20Methamphetamine%20Threat%20Assessment%20Key%20Findings.pdf); *Meth making a comeback, but it's not your neighbors cooking it anymore*, St. Louis Post Dispatch (July 2017) (https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/meth-making-a-comeback-but-it-s-not-your-neighbors/article_c26aafd7-0604-54ce-9c7a-559305865e44.html).

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claire McCaskill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" and last name "McCaskill" clearly distinguishable.

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson
Chairman