August 6, 2019

The Honorable Mark Green  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building, Suite 610  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20523-6100

Dear Administrator Green,

As Members of Congress committed to protecting the people of Nagorno Karabakh from the threat of landmines, we are deeply troubled again by the recent decision that USAID has made to halt all support for humanitarian landmine clearance in the traditional boundaries of the region at the end of 2019, as per your agency’s letter of July 30, 2019. Such a move would leave the people of Nagorno Karabakh to live in fear of death or injury from landmines, with no local capacity in place to address this ongoing threat.

This development is also a reversal of the testimony you offered on April 9, 2019 during a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in which you stated to Congressman Brad Sherman, on the record, that USAID is committed to completing the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnances within the traditional boundaries of Nagorno Karabakh. We’ve enclosed a transcript of the hearing for your reference. Whether or not USAID previously expected HALO Trust to complete its work by September 2019, you were clear in stating that USAID will work to completely clear Nagorno Karabakh of landmines and unexploded ordnances. Thus, we expect USAID to follow through on its commitment and provide additional funding to HALO Trust as needed to complete this critically important demining project.

Landmine clearance advances U.S. interests by promoting stability in a volatile region, while also providing critical humanitarian relief to thousands of families in Nagorno Karabakh who live in the shadow of conflict. As we stated in our last letter, in prior years there was hope that a mine-free Nagorno Karabakh would be achieved by 2020. However, it has come to our attention that this timeframe is unrealistic. For this reason, USAID’s continued support is vital to achieve the complete removal of landmines from Nagorno Karabakh.

We strongly urge USAID to reconsider the decision to stop funding for humanitarian landmine clearance in Nagorno Karabakh at the end of this year. It’s more important than ever that we continue to support the humanitarian demining program in the region and that you follow through on your commitment to provide additional funding to HALO Trust as needed to complete this vital project.

Sincerely,

TJ COX  
Member of Congress

BRAD SHERMAN  
Member of Congress

JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress
cc: The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chair, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs

Enclosure