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One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

January 11, 2021

The Hon. Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to urge you to immediately withdraw from the fruitless Vienna talks to re-enter the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and instead strongly enforce existing sanctions against Iran, particularly with respect to the oil trade between Iran and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Further delay of action on this only further enables Iran's malign activities, including their aggressive nuclear pursuits.

Administration officials' recent statements about the Vienna talks have made it clear that there is no productive diplomatic path forward at this time. Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley said on December 21, "It seems very clear (Iran) is trying to build leverage by expanding their nuclear program and hoping to use that leverage to get a better deal." State Department Spokesman Ned Price said on Dec. 28, "Iran has at best been dragging its feet in the talks while accelerating its nuclear escalation," and "we have not yet seen sufficient urgency...demonstrated by Iran. Of course, the last couple rounds also started with new nuclear provocations and then were characterized by, in some cases, vague, unrealistic, unconstructive positions on the part of Iran."

Meanwhile, Iran is charging forward with its nuclear program, using advanced centrifuges and producing equipment for such centrifuges while stockpiling increasing quantities of uranium enriched at 20 percent and 60 percent purity. Iran also continues to gain irreversible knowledge through this nuclear work. While the Administration has consistently indicated a willingness to negotiate toward a return to the JCPOA, Iran has made a return even less valuable for the P5+1 as it makes greater nuclear gains and gets closer to the deal's sunsets. Moreover, Iran is no longer implementing the IAEA's additional protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement, further diminishing the world's visibility on Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's growing nuclear provocations, while stalling progress in negotiations, are the epitome of bad faith. The United States and our partners must increase pressure on Iran to stop its dangerous nuclear advancements. The most effective way to do so is to strongly enforce our existing sanctions and urge our partners to take similar steps. If Iran is not prepared to negotiate as things stand, we need to build our leverage to compel them to negotiate a better, stricter deal with no sunsets.

As a first, immediate step, the Administration must enforce penalties against the PRC's flagrant violations of U.S. sanctions on Iran's oil trade. Iran's oil shipments are now worth at least \$1.3 billion per month, despite the fact that U.S. sanctions are still in effect. The PRC accounts for the bulk of these shipments. In September, *Reuters* reported that the Administration was prioritizing diplomatic engagement to solve this problem, with one official quoted as saying "this is a more effective path forward to address our concerns." Unfortunately, this strategy has not borne fruit. Reports in November showed that the PRC continued to import an average of over half a million barrels of Iranian oil per day. It is well past time for the Administration to end these farcical negotiations and fully enforce our existing sanctions to slash this vital source of revenue for the Iranian regime.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Foreign Affairs



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



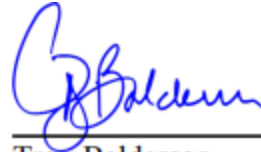
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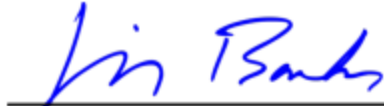
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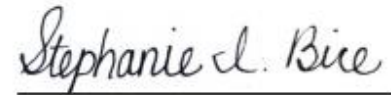
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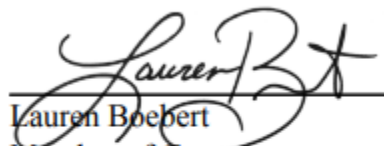
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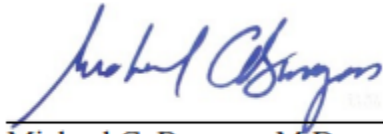
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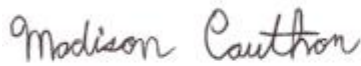
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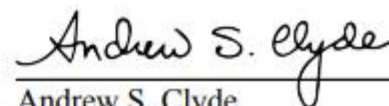
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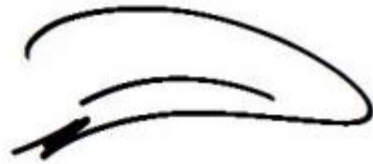
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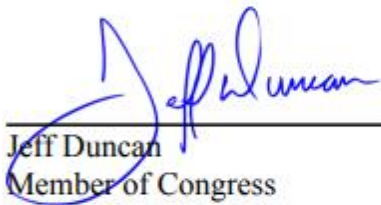
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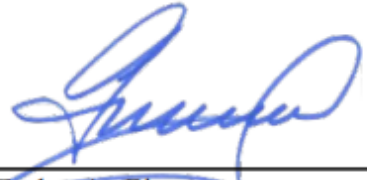
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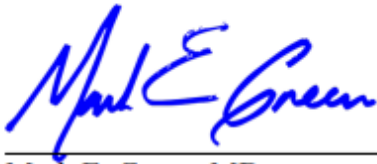
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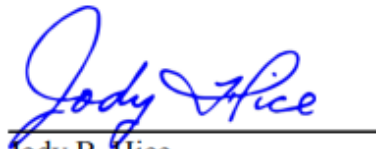
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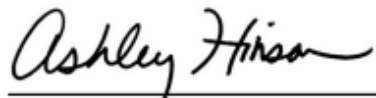
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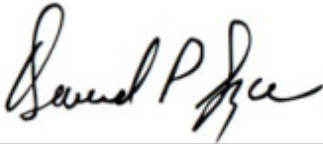
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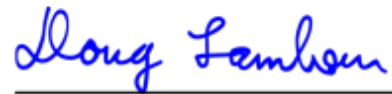
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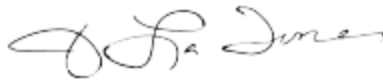
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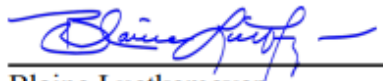
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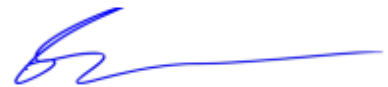
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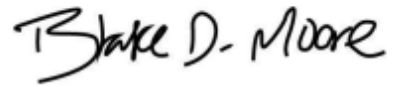
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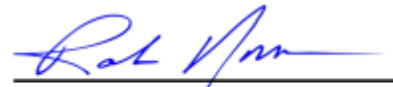
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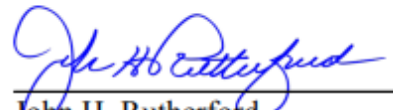
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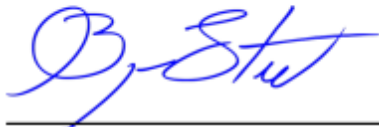
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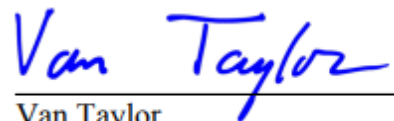
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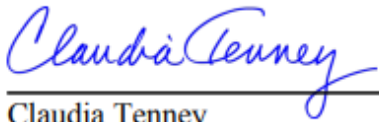
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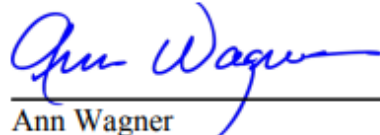
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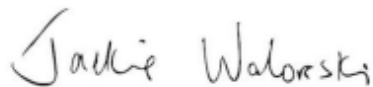
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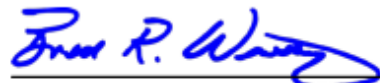
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