

May 22, 2018

President Donald Trump
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

With news of another deadly Ebola outbreak, this time in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we are writing to urge you to withdraw your proposal to rescind funds that were appropriated and are available to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Your letter to Congress, dated May 8, proposed rescinding \$252,000,000 – the entirety of the remaining balances – from the International Disaster Assistance account at the U.S. Agency for International Development on the grounds that the funds were “no longer needed because the Ebola response has largely concluded.” Clearly this is not the case. In fact, it is widely recognized by global health experts that Ebola will remain a potential threat for the foreseeable future – including to millions of Americans here and abroad.

This week, the World Health Organization reported that a new Ebola virus case was confirmed in the urban area of Mbandaka, a city of nearly 1.2 million in Congo. That Ebola has infected inhabitants of a densely populated area is alarming; just three years ago Ebola claimed the lives of more than 11,300 people in mostly rural communities in West Africa.

When Congress appropriated these funds in 2015, it did so to address an existing health crisis and to respond to Ebola or other deadly infectious diseases in the future. The funds will help respond to this latest Ebola outbreak in the DRC, and it will enable other countries vulnerable to future outbreaks to be better prepared to respond – thereby saving lives and limiting the immense costs to taxpayers of trying to contain infectious diseases once they occur.

We therefore urge you to withdraw your rescission proposal and enable USAID to use these funds for their intended purpose.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator

CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
United States Senator

JEANNE SHAHEEN
United States Senator

JEFF MERKLEY
United States Senator

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
United States Senator

CHRIS MURPHY
United States Senator