



KRIS MAYES
Attorney General

Office of the Attorney General
EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Phone: 602-542-7000
www.azag.gov

Mar 7, 2024

VIA E-MAIL

To: The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, The Honorable Mark Kelly, The Honorable David Schweikert, The Honorable Eli Crane, The Honorable Ruben Gallego, The Honorable Greg Stanton, The Honorable Andy Biggs, The Honorable Juan Ciscomani, The Honorable Raul Grijalva, The Honorable Debbie Lesko, The Honorable Paul Gosar

Re: Nonintrusive Fentanyl Detecting Technology at the US Southern Border

Dear Senators and Representatives,

This week, I was shocked by [reports](#)¹ that high-tech equipment that could detect and stop fentanyl from entering Arizona through our border with Mexico sits unused because Congress has failed to provide funding to install the equipment. With Arizona in the midst of a fentanyl crisis, this inaction is irresponsible and negligent at best. As the Attorney General of Arizona, I am using the authority of my office to protect its citizens from the fentanyl epidemic, and I expect the same from Congress. I am calling on you to set aside politics and work with your colleagues to fund the installation of this critical technology.

Mexican drug cartels have flooded Arizona with fentanyl and have turned our state into the fentanyl funnel for the rest of the country. In fact, over half of all fentanyl seized in the United States in 2022 was seized in Arizona. Fentanyl pills can now be purchased on the street for as low as 38 cents, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates that at least 70% of those pills contain a fatal dose of fentanyl.

The public safety effects have been predictably devastating. Fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. Cartels are even targeting Arizona teenagers on [social media](#)² with these cheap and deadly pills, and Arizona is seeing fentanyl overdoses in children as young as 14 years old.

Arizona's border with Mexico is its first line of defense in the fight against fentanyl. It is also the primary place Mexico's cartels use to smuggle fentanyl. Thanks to the incredible work of Customs and Border Protection employees 12,000 pounds of fentanyl were seized in FY 2023 at Arizona points of entry.

When I met with Vice President Harris last July to discuss Arizona's fentanyl crisis, I explained the need to fund high-tech security measures at the border to stop the flow of fentanyl. I was relieved that President Biden included \$305 million in his budget to do just that.

¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/border-fentanyl-scanners-unused-congress-provided-no-money-rcna141432>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cartels-social-media-recruit-american-teens-drug-human-smuggling-arizona-cochise-county-uber/>

Arizona's Congressional Delegation

March 7, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Today, United States taxpayers have already paid millions of dollars to purchase high-tech scanners that will help locate fentanyl hidden in vehicles. But those scanners are currently sitting unused in a warehouse because Congressional Republicans are blocking the funding necessary to install them. Funding these items is unquestionably needed. Failing to do so will allow deadly fentanyl to continue entering Arizona to be distributed to the rest of the United States. Inaction will sadly lead to more unnecessary fentanyl overdose deaths.

As the Arizona Attorney General, it is my job to protect Arizona's citizens, and I will continue using all legal avenues available to confront and fight the drug cartels that are causing immeasurable and irreparable harm in our state. Installing high-tech scanners at Arizona's border will help catch more fentanyl before it can enter the United States. Doing nothing will lead to more fentanyl overdose deaths and will only benefit the cartels.

I urge you to work with your colleagues to approve this funding for Arizona's border. Now is the time to act. Any delay will cost the lives of Arizonans.

Respectfully,



Kris Mayes
Arizona Attorney General