

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2016

Yuval Steinitz, Minister of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources
Avigdor Lieberman, Minister of Defense
Embassy of Israel to the United States
3514 International Dr. NW,
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Minister Steinitz and Minister Lieberman,

We praise your commitment to increase the sale of electricity to Gaza to support the operation of the Northern Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment Project (NGEST). The sale of the additional 6MW of energy, and the subsequent operation of NGEST, will have an immediate and tangible impact on limiting the flow of raw sewage into the Mediterranean, which poses serious health risks to both Israeli and Palestinian communities along the coast.

The operation of NGEST will immediately improve both the health and security of the Gaza Strip. As sanitation services and clean water access improve, communities become more stable, potentially undermining groups like Hamas that use civil unrest as a recruiting tool.

In light of these benefits, we also support a long-term approach to keep NGEST fully operational. The transfer of an additional 6MW through existing cross-border connections provides an emergency means to power NGEST operations, but these connections, which are already operating beyond full capacity, cannot sustainably power NGEST over the life of the project. As you consider the long-term viability of sewage treatment operations, particularly increases in operations to address growing sewage treatment needs, the sustainable provision of energy is critical. By ensuring continuous, reliable operations, the health and safety of Israel's southern coast will improve, and the operation of its coastal desalination facilities will be less frequently disrupted.

We recognize the many threats that Israel faces from its border with Gaza. We sincerely praise and support your practical actions that benefit Israeli and Palestinian citizens alike, and protect regional natural resources. The security and health of the people of Israel, and the safe access to water and sanitation services for all people, are both major global priorities for the United States. Your efforts have furthered both of these interests simultaneously. Again, we support solutions that sustain these gains. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



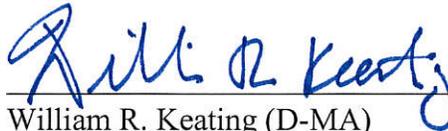
Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)
Member of Congress

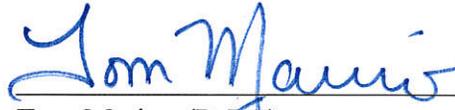


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