



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 11, 2019

Dear Secretary Shanahan,

The California National Guard Counter Drug Task Force (CDTF) is a federally-funded, state-coordinated and sanctioned program that focuses on countering the illicit narcotics threat through partnerships with federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies. I request federal resources to increase support for this mission and support the California National Guard's *statewide* efforts to combat Transnational Crime Organizations, whose operations in California are aiding unimaginable violence in Central America and forcing families to seek refuge in the United States.

In 2018, the CDTF supported the seizure of illicit drugs valued at \$2.2 billion. This is a high-value and high return-on-investment program. However, federal funding for the mission declined this last fiscal year from \$27 million to \$24 million. The CDTF mission should be expanded, not decreased.

The recent increase in Central American migrants seeking asylum in the United States reflects a desire for refuge from violence, repression and other economic and environmental devastation within their communities. This violence is often fueled by Transnational Crime Organizations engaged in the narcotics trade and smuggling firearms with U.S.-based criminal organizations.

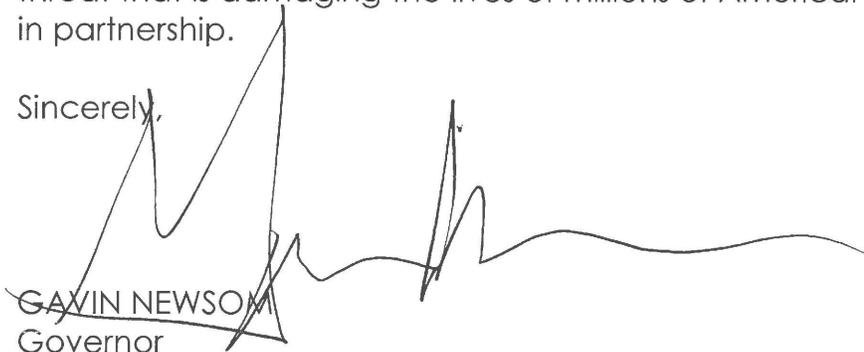
The use of California National Guard resources to address the challenges on the southern border are therefore better directed at tackling one of the root causes of asylum claims, rather than being directed at the consequential tasks at the border that are traditionally conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, but have been supported by the California National Guard since April 2018.

Expanding the CDTF mission will provide the required assets to help combat the illicit markets in narcotics and firearms in California, the U.S. and Central America. Increased funding will enable personnel to assist at land ports of entry to enhance capacity, allowing for the necessary searches of a greater number of containers at our seaports. It would also allow for more continuous monitoring of California's coastline and support task forces throughout the state to combat complex distribution of these narcotics.

Expanding this program would place critical funding where it is needed to address a threat that is damaging the lives of millions of Americans, and I look forward to working in partnership.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', written over the printed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.