

United States Senate

July 25, 2017

The Honorable Richard Baum
Acting Director
White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 17th St NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Acting Director Baum:

I am writing to request that the Office of National Drug Control Policy take every measure to stem the resurgent flood of methamphetamine that is once again a growing scourge on our communities in Montana and across the United States. The distribution of meth and other illicit drugs is a complex mechanism that shifts and adapts to our laws and efforts designed to stamp it out. Combatting it requires a strategy equally adaptive and highly coordinated across government agencies. As the office at the center of this effort, ONDCP holds the responsibility of being an effective hub for these efforts and a point of accountability to produce results.

First, how is ONDCP working to enhance inter-agency communications and coordination of intelligence efforts – including feedback loops to state, local, and tribal law enforcement? From numerous conversations with both federal and local law enforcement, it is clear that the production of meth has primarily shifted from domestic producers to international producers and is controlled by major drug trafficking organizations, such as Mexican drug cartels. Such a multi-jurisdictional issue requires highly effective, efficient, and timely communication between responsible agencies at all levels. The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) taskforces continue to have a significant impact in this area, but more work needs to be done. There needs to be serious consideration on how to expand the reach of HIDTA for those areas that currently do not qualify. Additionally, it is important to provide local law enforcement with information to help combat meth on their streets and to be informed when their work has assisted in stopping meth at its source.

Second, what is ONDCP doing to expand the reach of the HIDTA program? In Montana, only five counties qualify. However, the prevalence of drugs and drug-related crime stretches well beyond those counties. According to the Montana Board of Crime Control's *Crime in Montana: 2014-2015*, drug crimes in Montana were at a 35-year high in 2015, 59 percent higher than 2011. Richland County, part of the Bakken region and not a HIDTA county, saw 125 times more drug offenses in 2014 than 2009. HIDTA has had a significant impact in counties that qualify and these benefits should also be felt across all counties in Montana.

Finally, what actions can Congress take to develop new policies, replace outdated policies, and enhance current policies that have proven effective? As the scourge of meth and other illicit

drugs continues to heavily impact our communities and families, with one third of the record 3,400 children in Montana's foster care system there because of methamphetamine use by their parents and 53 percent of the Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation Narcotics Bureau 2016 investigations involving meth, we must advance our strategies and policies to effectively counter those who prey on our citizens.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that ONDCP continue to adapt to counter the changing threat of producers and distributors of meth, to increase inter-agency communications, and to work closely with Congress to ensure we have appropriate and effective policies. I look forward to working with you to meet these goals. Additionally, I invite you to join me in Montana to see firsthand the impact meth is having in our state and the work that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement is doing to prevent it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Daines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

STEVE DAINES
United States Senator