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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 23, 2005

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The Honorable John P. Walters
Director
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Walters:

Nowhere is the need for federal anti-drug resources more pronounced than in rural areas like Oregon's Second Congressional District, where entire communities struggle to cope with the proliferation of illegal substances and their devastating effects on families and communities. I am writing to encourage you to allocate additional federal resources to these rural areas to leverage the efforts underway by state and local law enforcement in communities across the country.

As you may recall, I have long supported efforts by counties I represent in eastern, central and southern Oregon to seek the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) designation with the hope of increasing federal counter-drug resources for the law enforcement personnel charged with combating illegal drug production, distribution and trafficking. Areas like Umatilla County, for example, which in 2004 had the highest per capita number of clandestine meth labs in the state, would benefit greatly from the additional federal focus that HIDTA designation would bring. Many other communities in my district are also fighting severe drug problems that threaten neighboring communities and adjacent states.

I am particularly troubled by the rise in production, trafficking and use of meth in the Second District, which, despite being home to only 20 percent of the population, had 35 percent of the state's meth lab seizures in 2004. This fact is particularly alarming given that law enforcement agencies in rural areas like the Second District have fewer resources available to locate and capture meth labs and investigate and apprehend the organizations and individuals responsible for production and distribution of the drug.

To learn more about counter-drug efforts already underway and to raise awareness among community members, I am currently conducting a series of seven forums focused on community efforts to combat the abuse of meth and other drugs, throughout the Second District. Deputy Director Scott Burns of your office has been of great assistance, traveling with me to southern Oregon for the first two forums in the series and lending his considerable expertise to the remainder of the events. As I travel from community to

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community I am heartened by the valiant efforts being undertaken by community member and organizations including counter-drug task forces, law enforcement, family service agencies, treatment and prevention organizations, but I am also becoming more and more convinced that to properly address the scourge of meth in our communities, more federal resources will need to be brought to bear.

I appreciate all of your efforts to help keep our communities safe from the threat of illegal drug abuse, and I thank you for your consideration of this important request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Best regards,



Greg Walden
Member of Congress

cc: Scott Burns, Deputy Director for State and Local Affairs