

# Congress of the United States

## U.S. House of Representatives

February 18, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Duffy, Secretary Noem, and Secretary Hegseth:

We are deeply concerned about the reported deployment by U.S. Customs & Border Protection of a Department of Defense-owned high-energy counter-unmanned aircraft system (C-UAS) in the vicinity of El Paso, Texas which resulted in the temporary closure of the local airspace by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Since the FAA's issuance of temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) beginning on February 11, which have since been rescinded, there are conflicting reports on the cause for this abrupt airspace closure, ranging from an alleged "cartel drone incursion" to a shoot-down of a party balloon. Even more concerning, we understand that the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense deployed this complex C-UAS technology without required coordination with the FAA. This lack of coordination and transparency with Congress on C-UAS missions introduces unnecessary and dangerous risk into U.S. airspace.

Despite repeated requests, our Committees have received little or no substantive information on your Departments' actions that led to the events in El Paso. We request a joint classified briefing as soon as possible to gain clarity into what led to the closure of airspace in the El Paso area and how your Departments plan to rectify the systemic failures in your C-UAS deployment process.

Your Departments are instrumental in protecting U.S. critical infrastructure and assets from the growing threat of malicious UAS operations. However, these efforts must be appropriately coordinated to ensure the safety of the American people.

We look forward to your prompt response and the joint classified briefing.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure



Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland  
Security



Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services

cc: The Honorable Bryan Bedford, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration  
The Honorable Daniel P. Driscoll, Secretary, U.S. Army  
The Honorable Rodney S. Scott, Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
The Honorable Andrew R. Garbarino, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security  
The Honorable Mike D. Rogers, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services