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July 30, 2013

The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Doggett:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Smuggled Tobacco Prevention Act (STOP Act). The bill offers Congress an opportunity to promote public health, protect revenues, and fight crime by reducing smuggling of tobacco products and related tobacco tax evasion.

Tobacco smuggling is a significant domestic and international problem for which there are solutions. The potential for high profits with relatively low risks has encouraged individuals to engage in tobacco smuggling, including organized criminal organizations. But steps can be taken to reduce tobacco smuggling that will help governments collect revenue generated from tobacco taxes and, of particular interest to our organizations, help reduce tobacco use, the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Reducing tobacco smuggling will help preserve the public health benefits of higher tobacco prices, a proven strategy for reducing tobacco use.

The STOP Act will enhance law enforcement by creating a system to track and trace tobacco products and block their diversion into illegal distribution channels. It does so by requiring tobacco products to carry a unique identification marking and by improving registration and record-keeping requirements. The bill also will keep machines used to manufacture tobacco products and to apply tax stamps out of the hands of illegal manufacturers and counterfeiters, make it tougher for law breakers to get federal tobacco-related permits, and enhance penalties.

We applaud you for your commitment to combating tobacco smuggling and for introducing this important legislation. It is our sincere hope that the STOP Act will be enacted into law during the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,



Christopher W. Hansen
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



Harold Wimmer
National President and CEO
American Lung Association



Nancy A. Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association



Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids