

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 25, 2013

H. E. Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara
President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire &
Chairman of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government
Economic Community of West African States
Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Dear President Ouattara:

We write to express our strong support for the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) effort to develop a regional mining code that will provide guiding principles and high standards to all 15 ECOWAS member countries. We are concerned that West Africa's vast mineral wealth has too often been a source of conflict, violence and corruption. In Ghana, for example, local villagers have been exposed to toxic chemical spills and physical abuse by security forces employed by companies from the US and other countries. A recent government study found a pattern of widespread human rights abuse in mining communities. To ensure that minerals play a beneficial role in the development of West Africa, mining companies operating in the region must follow the highest standards for human rights, environmental protection and revenue transparency. We believe that by creating uniform high standards across the region, an ECOWAS mining code will make a very significant contribution toward ensuring that West Africa's mineral wealth benefits its poor populations.

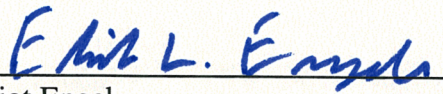
We urge ECOWAS to finalize a mining code and for Member States to adopt that code as expeditiously as possible. In particular, we encourage ECOWAS to protect the basic right of local communities by adopting Article 16.3 of the ECOWAS Mining Directive, which states, "Companies shall obtain free, prior, and informed consent of local communities before exploration begins and prior to each subsequent phase of mining and post-mining operations." We further encourage the inclusion of language requiring full disclosure by mining companies of tax and royalty payments on a project-by-project basis. Such a provision is consistent with US law as set out by Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act.

We applaud current efforts to develop an ECOWAS Mining Code and look forward to its adoption and implementation.

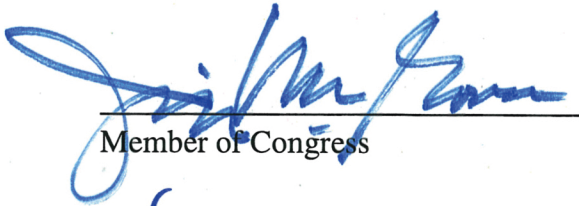
Sincerely,

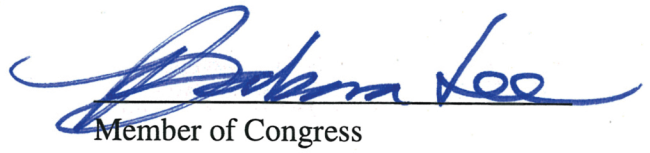


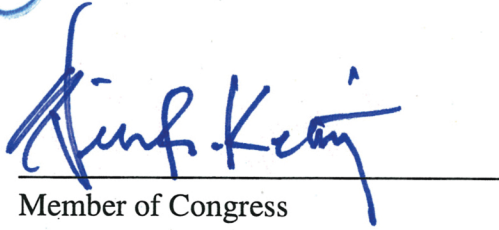
Karen Bass
Member of Congress

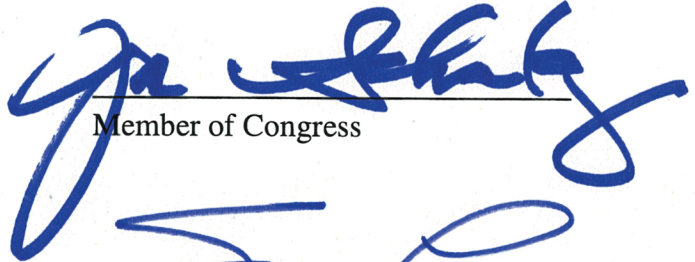


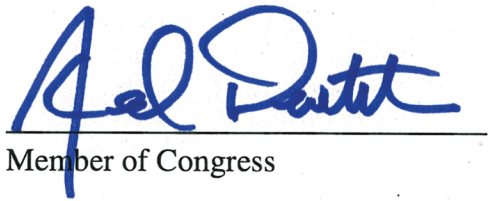
Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

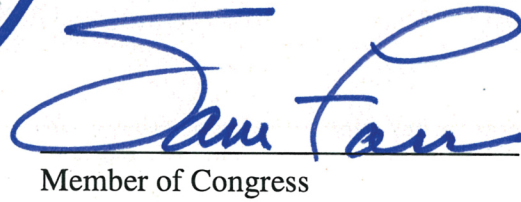

Member of Congress

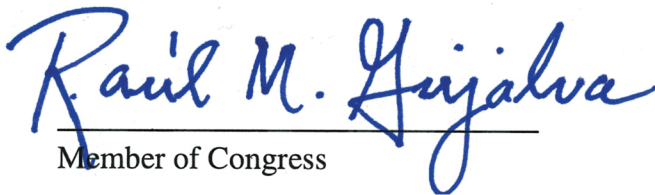

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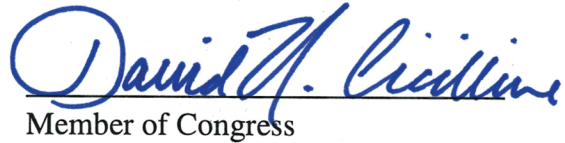

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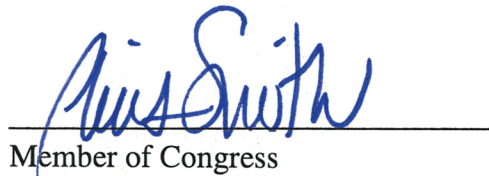

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Cc:

President Macky Sall of Senegal
President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone,
Prime Minister José Maria Pereira Neves of Cape Verde,
President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin,
President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso,
President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia,
President John Mahama of Ghana,
President Alpha Condé of Guinea,
Acting President Manuel Nhamadjo of Guinea Bissau,
President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia,
Acting President Dioncounda Traoré of Mali,
President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger,
President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria,
President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo