



January 16, 2024

Attorney General Bob Ferguson
1125 Washington St. SE,
Olympia, WA 98501

Tessa M. Gorman
Acting U.S. Attorney
Western District of Washington
700 Stewart St., Ste. 5220
Seattle, WA 98101

Ann Davison
Seattle City Attorney
701 5th Ave, Ste. 2050
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Request for Legal Action Regarding Blocking Traffic on I-5 on January 6, 2024

Dear Attorney General Ferguson, Acting U.S Attorney Gorman, and City Attorney Davidson,

Please accept this letter as a formal demand that your offices investigate and seek an injunction or legal relief against the dangerous, unpermitted, and disruptive “protest” activities described herein. We also demand that your offices conduct a comprehensive investigation into the responses of the City of Seattle, the state of Washington, and their agencies that resulted in the delay in removing these disruptions in a timely manner. As the chief law enforcement officers in your respective jurisdictions, it falls on each of you to ascertain the facts that endangered and inconvenienced tens of thousands of Washingtonians and do whatever is necessary to avoid a future calamity.

As reported in the media, on January 6, 2024, starting at roughly 1:00 p.m., up to 500 “protesters,” first with their own cars and then as a mass of pedestrians, [blocked](#) a northbound stretch of I-5 running through part of Seattle—between Interstate 90 and Mercer Street—closing roughly [six miles](#) of freeway to any traffic whatsoever. Their antics stalled all traffic flow for over *four hours* before the Washington State Patrol (“WSP”) finally removed them. The apparent purpose of their protest was to demand a cessation to hostilities in the still-ongoing Israel-Hamas War.

Protestors used [“sleeping dragons”](#)—handcuffing one another into a dragon-like formation that requires bolt cutters to disable. While this and other anti-removal tactics might have somewhat delayed the authorities’ response time, given the public emergency the protest created, it is unclear why the responding agencies failed to act with greater speed and imperative. Furthermore, it is not evident at this time why the Seattle Police Department or the WSP apparently [failed to detain or arrest](#) any of the protesters on site. As of the date of this letter, there have still been *zero* arrests.

One can imagine the incentive for future disruptions this lack of legal consequences creates. We understand the WSP has initiated an internal investigation, with early findings [claiming](#) the agency did not have sufficient warning of, or resources to combat, the planned disruption. However, this explanation is not consistent with the Seattle Police Department’s or the WSP’s [foreknowledge](#) of social media posts advertising the protest. The concern is that political pressure may have been placed on both of these law enforcement agencies to slow or alter their response in a manner that was not consistent with the threat to public safety posed by the blockage of a major interstate in our state’s largest city. To ensure full public accountability, your offices should open their own comprehensive investigations into the matter.

It is difficult to overstate the threat to public safety, health, commerce, and even national security that this event caused. The “protest,” which was unpermitted and in clear violation of multiple laws—and never *would have* been permitted, given its nature—disrupted the lives of thousands of motorists, including weekend commuters, those in need of urgent medical care, and others engaged in the normal course of commerce or recreation. It is telling as to the wide-ranging impacts of these actions and how they have been received that the Seattle Symphony is apparently considering legal action against the groups given that musicians and audience members alike were unable to attend the concert scheduled for that evening.

It should not be necessary to point out that in addition to constituting a major transportation corridor for goods, persons, and first responders, that part of I-5 serves as the major link between multiple military bases and ports and thus posed a threat to national security as well. It should be noted that, according to media reports, the groups supporting the protest include, among others, [Falastinyat](#), the Seattle chapter of the [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), [Support the Palestinian Voice](#), [Students United for Palestinian Equality and Return](#), and [Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network](#), the latter of which is alleged to have [ties](#) to a known U.S.-designated terrorist organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. *Individuals* allegedly involved in planning the roadblock include [Alon Lapid](#), [Bissan Barghouti](#), and [Susie Lepow](#), all of whom, to our knowledge, have not even been interviewed by law enforcement.

Actions of this sort pose various dangers to the general public and cannot and *should not* be tolerated any longer. As such, we also request that your office take immediate legal action against any of the groups and individuals allegedly involved in the incident, including but not limited to injunctive relief to prevent any future road blockages and similar dangerous activities.

We at CADF fully support First Amendment rights, including and categorically the right to peacefully protest and petition our government for redress of grievances. In addition, there is a tradition of civil disobedience that can be appropriate under certain circumstances not involving imperiling lives. We will always defend the rights of all groups and individuals to protest *any* cause whatsoever, whether we agree with them or not, as we are confident that in the marketplace of ideas, reasoned views will always ultimately prevail. However, as defenders of freedom for *all* Washingtonians, we cannot abide protest activities that are unpermitted, blatantly illegal, and pose real dangers to the health, safety, and welfare of the state's residents. Free speech has never been so expansive as to allow disruptions of others' freedoms of movement and action.

In conclusion, we are asking your offices to do the following as soon as possible:

1. Begin legal proceedings against the groups that orchestrated the illegal actions on I-5, including seeking injunctive relief to prevent further "protests."
2. Begin investigations to ascertain if political pressure in favor of these groups was used against law enforcement and other agencies, which led to a delay in responding to the "protest."

We respectfully request that your offices take these necessary and appropriate steps, which are legally within your offices' purview, to prevent all further illegal activity by the groups and individuals identified in this letter under the guise of "protests", which will avoid any need for legal action on our part. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackson Maynard, Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

Jackson Maynard
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