



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**JANUARY 16, 2024**

## **CADF DEMANDS LEGAL ACTION REGARDING THE I-5 TRAFFIC BLOCKAGE “PROTEST”**

*CADF also seeks investigations by the State Attorney General, the U.S. Attorney for Western Washington, and the City of Seattle into the government’s delayed response*

**Olympia, Washington — JANUARY 16, 2024** — This morning, the Citizen Action Defense Fund (“CADF”) submitted a formal request to Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Acting U.S. Attorney Tessa Gorman, and Seattle City Attorney Ann Davidson to take action regarding an illegal and unpermitted “protest” that occurred on I-5, which severely disrupted traffic in the Seattle area on January 6, 2024. The incident endangered tens of thousands of Washingtonians before the Washington State Patrol (WSP) finally stepped in after *four hours*. The letter demands that each of the offices initiate legal action against the groups, including seeking injunctive relief to block future illegal and dangerous “protests.” The letter also requests investigations into whether political pressure was used on law enforcement agencies responding to the incident that led to delays that impacted public safety.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> at around 1:00 p.m., roughly 500 “protesters” blocked a stretch of I-5 running through part of Seattle, blocking off approximately six miles of freeway and stopping the flow of traffic entirely. The stated purpose of the group was to protest the Israeli-Gaza conflict. Despite indications that the Seattle Police Department (“SPD”) and the Washington State Patrol (“WSP”) had advance notice of the “protest,” Washingtonians in the area endured a four-hour delay before the WSP finally responded and removed the roadblock. However, neither the city police nor troopers arrested or detained any of the protestors on-site and as of the date of this release, there apparently have still been no arrests.

In the letter, Jackson Maynard, Executive Director and Counsel for CADF states: “It is difficult to overstate the threat to public safety, health, commerce, and even national security that this event caused. The ‘protest’ was unpermitted, in clear violation of multiple laws, and never would have been permitted, given its nature. In addition, it 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.”

The letter highlighted that the roadblock also endangered national security, with several bases and naval ports located just off I-5. Halting access to them is a serious risk. And, as stated in CADF’s letter, the groups in support of the protest are alleged to have ties to known U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Many of these groups celebrated the havoc they wreaked on the area on social media after the conclusion of the “protest.”

“This wasn’t a protest – it was an attack on our state. It doesn’t make sense that law enforcement agencies are claiming they didn’t have sufficient notice to prepare for it – all they had to do was check social media in the days prior to it. I am really concerned that outside political pressure was used to keep these agencies from responding to the threat quickly and effectively in order to keep our citizens safe,” said Jackson Maynard, Executive Director and Counsel for the Citizen Action Defense Fund. “We here at CADF are big proponents of the people’s First Amendment right to protest peacefully, but that right doesn’t include putting other Washingtonians at risk. The prosecuting authorities we’ve identified in our letter should step up and take action within their jurisdictions to ensure that this doesn’t happen again.”

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