



February 2, 2026

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin,

On behalf of the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), I am proud to offer our strong support for the nomination and confirmation of Mr. Robert Cekada as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). With three decades of law enforcement experience, including over 20 years in progressively responsible roles at ATF, where he currently serves as Deputy Director, Mr. Cekada brings unparalleled knowledge, proven leadership, and a deep understanding of the agency's mission, making him exceptionally well-prepared to lead the agency.

Founded in 1913, IME is a trade association whose mission is to promote the safe and secure manufacture, transport, distribution, and use of commercial explosives. IME's members include manufacturers, distributors and users of commercial explosives and other companies that provide related products and services. The commercial explosives industry is vital to the U.S. economy, contributing more than \$19 billion annually and creating 15,000 direct industry jobs and supporting more than 60,000 total jobs.

As the primary regulator of the commercial explosives industry, ATF plays a critical role in enforcing laws and regulations governing the industry. IME and our members maintain a strong and collaborative partnership with ATF, working together to uphold the highest standards that protect both workers and the communities in which we operate. Our commitment to material security and stewardship is demonstrated by an exemplary security record.

Mr. Cekada is well-positioned to continue this constructive partnership, as his more than 20 years of experience at ATF give him a deep understanding of the concerns and needs of our industry. We look forward to working with Mr. Cekada to advance our shared goals of a safe and secure commercial explosives industry.

For the aforementioned reasons, I strongly encourage the committee act promptly to confirm Robert Cekada's nomination as Director of the ATF.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Clark Mica', with a stylized, cursive script.

J. Clark Mica
President