

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 23, 2021

Friends of the Arava Institute  
1320 Centre Street, Suite 206  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Dear Friends of the Arava Institute:

I have long been proud to support the state of Israel, not only as the world's only Jewish state and America's strongest ally in the Middle East, but also as a global leader in scientific innovation and discovery. Israeli scientists and companies have advanced the fields of sustainable agriculture, water conservation and desalination, green technology, and renewable energy, making an impact not only in the MENA region, but also around the world.

I have also been an advocate for a two-state solution and for self-determination for the Palestinian people throughout my time in Congress. I have been proud to support bills and programs that bring the region closer to a just and lasting peace, including grassroots economic partnerships and opportunities for regional cooperation on a host of issues.

When I arrived in Congress just over a decade ago, I was fortunate to learn from the examples of multiple strong advocates for the U.S.-Israel relationship, for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding, and for the importance of grassroots-level cooperation in the MENA region.

That is why I am proud to submit this letter for the Friends of the Arava Institute's virtual gala on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, to celebrate a quarter of a century of the Institute's important work and the Institute's bright future. Arava Institute for Environmental Studies knows what we here in Congress know: that mutual cooperation on a grassroots level is an important building block for peace, and that the world benefits when we create and seize opportunities to tackle the challenge of climate change together as a global community—advancing peace and security as we protect our planet. In a region hard-hit, not only by conflict, but also by global temperature rise and water scarcity, the Arava Institute has grown from a small environmental and research program on Kibbutz Ketura, Israel, with the aspirational goal of bringing regional actors together; to a dynamic institution, with Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and other partners working together to address the region's environmental challenges.

It is so appropriate that Ambassador Dennis Ross will present the First Annual Peacemaker Award to the Honorable Nita Lowey, who recently retired from serving 32 years in Congress. There is no better person I can think of to receive this award than Representative Lowey, who, in her decades of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, demonstrated unwavering dedication to Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people programs and grassroots partnerships that promote regional cooperation on a range of important issues. To culminate Representative Lowey's exemplary career, at the end of last year, Congress passed the Nita M. Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act—which will cement her legacy by strengthening the important work of not only the Arava Institute,

but scores of other people-to-people initiatives. The funding in this important bill will promote economic cooperation for generations to come, enabling Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to come together and move the region toward peace and security. For over 30 years, Nita Lowey led the way in Congress on the U.S.-Israel and Israeli-Palestinian relationships, and the results of her efforts—as she herself has said—will continue *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation, at Arava and throughout the region.

I congratulate my esteemed former colleague on this honor, and I congratulate the Arava Institute and Friends of the Arava Institute on a remarkable 25 years. I wish you an even more impactful next 25, as we continue to work together to address climate change and pursue environmental cooperation and peace in the region.

Mazel tov, and b'hatzlachah.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Deutch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Ted Deutch  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS