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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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November 15, 2017

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

On April 6, 2017, I wrote to the Justice Department regarding reports that Paul Manafort, Rick Gates, the Podesta Group, and Mercury LLC failed to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) for work on behalf of the Ukrainian government.<sup>1</sup> Since then, all have registered under FARA, and Mr. Manafort and Mr. Gates have been charged by Special Counsel Mueller for violating that statute. However, the Podesta Group and Mercury LLC have not been charged.

Today, I write concerning lobbying work done by three lobbying firms – the Podesta Group, BGR Government Affairs, and Kountoupes Denham – on behalf of Uranium One, a Canadian company owned by the Russian government. All firms lobbied both houses of Congress and the executive branch. None of the firms have registered under FARA for their representation.<sup>2</sup> However, at the time of representation Uranium One was owned by the Russian government-owned company, Rosatom.

According to the Podesta Group’s Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA) filings, it represented Uranium One in lobbying activity relating to international mining issues and projects and international trade policy.<sup>3</sup> BGR Government Affairs “[p]rovid[ed] strategic counsel and assistance regarding the CFIUS process” and continued representation after CFIUS approved Rosatom’s acquisition of Uranium One.<sup>4</sup> Kountoupes Denham provided Uranium One lobbying

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<sup>1</sup> The FARA requires individuals to register with the Department of Justice (DOJ) if they act, even through an intermediary, “as an agent, representative, employee, or servant” or “in any other capacity” at the behest of a foreign principal, including a foreign political party, for purposes of engagement with a United States official. The registration applies to anyone who attempts to influence a U.S. government official on behalf of a foreign principal in an effort to “formulat[e], adopt[,], or chang[e] the domestic or foreign policies of the United States.” Likewise, an individual whose activities are subject to registration under FARA and who sends informational material “for or in the interest of [a] foreign principal” with the intent or belief that such material will be circulated among at least two persons must transmit the material to the Attorney General no later than 48 hours after actual transmission. Notably, an ongoing failure to register with the DOJ is a continuing offense.

<sup>2</sup> In their LDA registration filings, the Podesta Group and Kountoupes disclosed that Uranium One was owned by Atomredmetzoloto (ARMZ), a subsidiary of Rosatom, the Russian government’s equivalent to the Department of Energy. Recent news reports indicate that these firms may have failed to register under FARA for their lobbying work. Richard Pollock, *Tony Podesta Lobbied For Russia’s ‘Uranium One’ And Did Not File As A Foreign Agent*, Daily Caller (November 5, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Podesta Group Lobbying Disclosure Act filings 2012, 2014, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> BGR Lobbying Disclosure Act Registration Statement, 2010.

support for nuclear energy and mining issues specifically as it related to H.R. 2054, the Energy and Revenue Enrichment Act, among other things.<sup>5</sup>

However, it appears that the DOJ did not require these lobbying firms to register under FARA for work on behalf of Uranium One. Accordingly, please answer the following no later than November 29, 2017:

1. Please explain why DOJ required FARA registration for the Podesta Group and Mercury LLC for work on behalf of the European Center for a Modern Ukraine (ECFMU) but has not required the Podesta Group, BGR Government Affairs, or Kountoupes Denham to register under FARA for work on behalf of Uranium One.
2. What actions has the Justice Department taken to assess whether the Podesta Group, BGR Government Affairs, and Kountoupes Denham should have registered under FARA for work on behalf of Uranium One?
3. Has the Justice Department sent a letter of inquiry to any of the entities? If so, please provide a copy. If not, why not?
4. Under 28 C.F.R. § 5.2, any present or prospective agent of a foreign entity may request an advisory opinion from the Justice Department regarding the need to register. Has any of the entities ever requested one in relation to their work on behalf of Uranium One? If so, please provide a copy of the request and opinion.

I anticipate that your written response and the responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. The Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information. The Committee is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

Should you have further questions, please contact Josh Flynn-Brown of my Judiciary Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary

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<sup>5</sup> Kountoupes Denham Lobbying Disclosure Act Registration Statement, 2011.