

Exclusive: Senior US Republican demands Biden administration shut Gaza aid pier

WASHINGTON, June 27 (Reuters) - The Republican lawmaker who leads the House Armed Services Committee has written to the Biden administration formally demanding it shut down its aid pier off the coast Gaza, calling the operation ineffective, risky and a waste of money.

The offshore floating pier, announced by Biden in March as a response to the threat of famine in the Gaza Strip, was constructed off the coast of the enclave by the U.S. military as a way to bring in food and other aid supplies.

The U.S. military has been authorized to operate it until the end of July, but a U.S. Agency for International Development official said this week that the administration could seek to extend it for at least another month.

"I urge the Administration to immediately cease this failed operation before further catastrophe occurs and consider alternative means of land and air-based humanitarian aid delivery," House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers wrote in a letter seen by Reuters.

The letter, sent to White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, has not been previously reported.

Rogers has long opposed the pier and has called in the past for it to be dismantled, but he had not previously expressed that view in a formal written letter to the administration.

His armed services committee is the Pentagon's top oversight body in the House of Representatives, and formal requests from its chairman traditionally require a response from Pentagon officials.

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