

May 1, 2019

The Honorable Gary Peters  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Peters and Cornyn:

As stakeholders interested in the facilitation activities of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at land, sea, and air ports-of-entry around the globe, we thank you for introducing S. 1004, the Securing America's Ports of Entry Act, which would increase the authorized number of CBP officers by 600 annually to help the agency meet its current and future staffing needs. The bill also would provide better information about CBP's infrastructure needs at its ports-of-entry, as well as much needed transparency and accountability regarding the agency's increasing reliance on reimbursable services agreements and temporary duty assignments to cover its system-wide staffing shortfalls.

We share your commitment to ensuring that America's borders remain safe, secure, and efficient for all users, while enhancing our global competitiveness through the facilitation of legitimate travel and trade. With CBP's onboard data and most recent workload staffing model showing a shortage of over 3,700 CBP officers, current staffing levels fail to address the growing demands of travel and trade at our ports-of-entry. Providing additional CBP officers at this time of growing volumes of international passengers and cargo will both reduce lengthy wait times and facilitate new economic opportunities in communities throughout the United States.

Increasing CBP officer staffing is an economic driver for the U.S. economy. According to the Joint Economic Committee (JEC), "every day 1.1 million people and \$5.9 billion in goods legally enter and exit through the ports of entry." CBP estimates that the annual hiring of an additional 600 CBP officers at the ports-of-entry could increase yearly economic activity by over \$1 billion and result in the addition of over 17,000 new jobs.

While the volume of commerce crossing our borders has more than tripled in the past 25 years, CBP staffing has not kept pace with demand. Long wait times at our ports-of-entry lead to travel delays and uncertainty, which can increase supply-chain costs and cause passengers to miss their connections. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, border delays result in losses to output, wages, jobs, and tax revenue due to decreases in spending by companies, suppliers, and consumers. The travel industry estimates long CBP wait times discourage international visitors, who spend an average of \$4,200 per visit, from traveling to the United States. JEC research also finds border delays cost the U.S. economy upwards of \$5 billion each year.

Thank you for your leadership on these important matters. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance to your efforts.

Sincerely,

Airports Council International – North America  
American Association of Port Authorities  
National Treasury Employees Union  
American Association of Airport Executives  
Borderplex Alliance  
Border Trade Alliance  
Cargo Airline Association  
Cruise Lines International Association  
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association  
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas  
Global Business Travel Association  
National Association of Waterfront Employers  
New York Shipping Association  
United States Maritime Alliance  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Travel Association  
West Gulf Maritime Association