

March 21, 2022

The Honorable Gary Peters  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn  
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. 3850, 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. CBP's most recent workload staffing model, which used data from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, still showed a shortage of nearly 1,000 CBP officers across the system. Since the model was most recently run, the pandemic has subsided and international trade and travel volumes are expected to surpass pre-pandemic levels in many locations. Current staffing levels already fail to address the growing demand of travel and trade at our ports-of-entry today, and we anticipate the workload staffing model will indicate drastically higher CBP staffing shortages at the ports-of-entry in subsequent runs. Providing additional CBP officers at this time of growing volumes of international passengers and cargo in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic 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 and passengers crossing our borders is on the rise once again, CBP staffing has not kept pace with demand. Long wait times at our ports-of-entry lead to delays and uncertainty, which can increase supply-chain costs and cause travelers 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  
Airforwarders Association  
American Society of Travel Advisors  
Borderplex Alliance  
Border Trade Alliance  
Cargo Airline Association  
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas  
Global Business Travel Association  
Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association  
National Association of Waterfront Employers  
National Maritime Safety Association  
San Diego – Tijuana Smart Border Coalition  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Travel Association  
West Gulf Maritime Association