

CBP STAFFING COALITION

December 5, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Granger, Chair Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Collins:

The following stakeholders interested in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) trade and travel facilitation activities at air, sea, and land ports-of-entry urge you to support funding for 1,000 new CBP officers in the bipartisan border security package included in the President's fiscal year 2024 emergency supplemental request.

CBP's mission at the ports-of-entry includes but is not limited to facilitating the lawful flow of trade and travel, stopping human smuggling, and seizing illicit drugs to ensure our national and economic security. In particular, the funding in the emergency supplemental will increase the number of CBP officers to combat illicit fentanyl and other synthetic opioid trafficking at the ports of entry. In fiscal year 2023, CBP seized more than 27,000 pounds of fentanyl, compared with 14,600 pounds the previous year, with most seized at ports of entry according to CBP drug seizure statistics. This investment in CBP officer staffing will increase illicit fentanyl seizures and save lives.

Additionally, the nation's ports of entry are vital gateways for international commerce and travel collecting almost \$112 billion in duties, taxes, and fees in fiscal year 2022. CBP employees at the ports of entry are the second largest collectors of revenue in the federal government. Inadequate funding for these CBP employees shortchanges our economic growth and our national security.

Our air, sea, and land ports are in desperate need of more CBP employees at the ports-of-entry to reduce wait times for international travelers and cargo shippers, improve the interdiction of illegal drugs and illicit goods, and handle the processing of migrants seeking asylum. According to CBP's most recent workload staffing models, the agency needs to hire at least 4,000 CBP officers. Without the funding for 1,000 new CBP officers, frontline employees will continue to face excessive overtime shifts, out-of-town deployments that leave their home ports even more understaffed, and the additional stress of dealing with long lines of travelers and shippers enduring longer wait times.

The supplemental will provide funding to increase CBP staffing levels to meet current and future needs in communities all over the United States. International travel and trade are back, but staffing shortfalls are hampering CBP's ability to handle the growing volumes of passengers and cargo, leading to lengthy wait

times and lost economic opportunities for businesses across America. Adding new CBP officers is crucial to America's continued economic progress by helping CBP to maintain its operational capacity at all the ports-of-entry.

American businesses rely on the safe and efficient movement of goods and people across our borders. Long wait times at our ports-of-entry lead to delays and uncertainty, which can increase supply-chain costs and cause travelers and cargo to miss their connections and get left behind. 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 also estimates long CBP wait times discourage international visitors, who spend an average of \$4,200 per visit, from traveling to the United States. Additionally, the Joint Economic Committee has found that border delays cost the U.S. economy upwards of \$5 billion annually.

We share your commitment to ensuring that America's borders remain safe, secure, and efficient for all users, while also enhancing our global competitiveness through the facilitation of legitimate travel and trade. Funding 1,000 CBP officers in the fiscal year 2024 emergency supplemental will reduce lengthy wait times and facilitate new economic opportunities in communities throughout the United States. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance in your efforts.

Sincerely,

National Treasury Employees Union
Airports Council International – North America
American Association of Port Authorities
American Association of Airport Executives
Airforwarders Association
American Society of Travel Advisors
Border Trade Alliance
Cargo Airline Association
Douglas International Port Authority
Douglas Regional Economic Development Corporation
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
Global Business Travel Association
Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority
Greater Yuma Port Authority
Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay
National Association of Maritime Associations
National Association of Waterfront Employers
National Council of Textile Organizations
National Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of America
Smart Border Coalition
Texas International Produce Association
The International Air Cargo Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Travel Association
West Gulf Maritime Association