

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2011

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

As members of the Congressional Border Caucus, we write to express our deep concerns about the impact of the recently enacted continuing resolution (P.L. 112-6) on the General Services Administration (GSA) schedule for completion of construction projects at land ports-of-entry along the U.S./Mexico border.

As you know, P.L. 112-6 provided no funds for GSA construction projects in FY2011. We are deeply concerned that FY2011 funds, requested by GSA, for land ports-of-entry projects have been eliminated. We are also concerned that the construction schedules for all land ports-of-entry will be pushed back.

Our land ports-of-entry play a critical role in homeland security. These facilities are home to many federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS), Department of Justice's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Bureau of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and even the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Together, these agencies protect our homeland from those who would do us harm, ensure that all persons and cargo crossing the border are safe and legal, and facilitate commerce by making our borders more efficient.

Consider these facts:

- On an average day, about \$2 billion in trade cross the nation's 163 border crossings, along with more than 350,000 vehicles, 135,000 pedestrians and 30,000 trucks.
- 120, or 75 percent, of land ports of entry are under the jurisdiction and control of GSA. The remaining 43 are under the jurisdiction and control of the Department of Homeland Security.
- There are more than 1,900 miles between the United States and Mexico, and more than 5,000 miles between the U.S. and Canada.
- About 88 percent of U.S. merchandise trade by value with Canada and Mexico moves on land.

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- Since 1990, the value of freight shipments among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico has risen by 170 percent, growing an average of 8 percent annually.
- Approximately 23 million U.S. citizens cross the land borders into Canada and Mexico a total of nearly 130 million times each year. Of the 23 million land border crossers, about one-half are frequent crossers, making the trip at least once a year.
- A relatively small number of U.S. citizens cross the border every business day and are responsible for 18 percent of the crossings, while 2 percent of border travelers account for almost 48 percent of the total annual crossings.
- The San Ysidro port of entry – 15 miles south of downtown San Diego – is the busiest land border crossing in the western hemisphere handling over 31 million northbound and southbound passenger vehicles annually.
- Of all goods moved in U.S.-International trade, more than one out of every three dollars is with Canada and Mexico.

A 2006 study estimated that wait times at the border due to insufficient lanes, inspectors, and technology at ports of entry results in about \$2 billion in lost economic output in the San Diego region alone, every year. Each additional 15 minutes of wait time at ports of entry represents an additional \$1 billion loss in productivity and a loss of 134,000 jobs in the bi-national border region.

As the House considers FY2011 appropriations legislation, we urge you to restore full funding for GSA construction projects at of our nation's land ports-of-entry.

Sincerely,



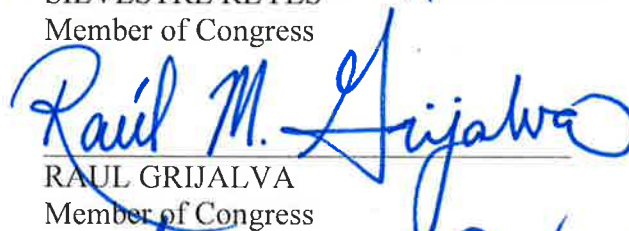
BOB FILNER
Member of Congress



SILVESTRE REYES
Member of Congress



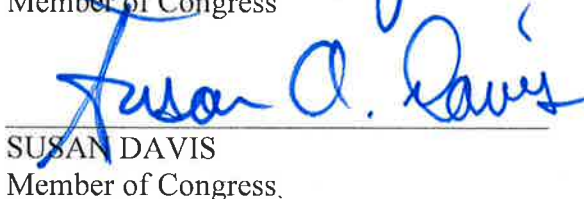
HENRY CUELLAR
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