

March 28, 2019

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
US Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martha McSally
US Senate
B40D Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Reassignment of CBP Staffing to Border Patrol.

Dear Senator Sinema and Senator McSally,

On March 27, 2019, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, announced the reassignment of 750 officers from our ports of entry to support the activities of the Border Patrol. While we share the concerns of the enforcement efforts performed by the Border Patrol, the activities performed by the Office of Field Operations (OFO) at the ports of entry should not take a back seat.

Our ports of entry are also at the forefront of the efforts to protect the Homeland. They are gateways for tremendous amounts of trade and tourism and the impacts of the ports of entry are felt far beyond their physical location at the border. At Douglas 287,800 trucks, 1.7 million cars and 4.0 million people crossed the border in 2018. The economic impact of our ports of entry at Douglas cannot be overstated.

Economic reports indicate that more than \$4 billion worth of trade crosses through Douglas each year. The University of Arizona estimated that Mexican visitors spend over \$7.2 million per day throughout Arizona, for an annual impact of over \$2.6 billion.

Recent efforts to enhance the enforcement activities at the border have already increased average wait times for cars and pedestrians, with wait times exceeding two hours have been recorded at Douglas and that is happening more frequently. Even Commissioner McAleenan, during his press conference in El Paso, Texas on March 27, admitted that the reassigning of officers from the ports will result in increased wait times.

The final quarter of 2018 saw dramatic decreases at Douglas in volumes of cars and people – the period during which the Administration deployed additional resources to the border. When we compare border crossing data for the fourth quarter of 2018 with the same period of 2017 at Douglas, pedestrians dropped by 23.1%, cars dropped by 12.3% and total people dropped by 15.2% this drop means that 170,000 fewer people crossed at Douglas for the last three months of 2018.

During the announcement by Commissioner McAleenan, he himself stressed that the reassignment of personnel would mean longer wait times at ports of entry. We are very afraid of the consequences to our local economy and the impacts to all of Arizona and the nation from these decisions.

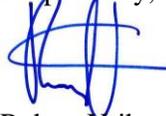
Longer crossing times for trucks will have a severe impact on Just-In-Time manufacturing structures in the manufacturing sector and the crossing of perishable commodities. In short, the impacts of additional wait times resulting from reduced staffing are many.

Our officers at the ports of entry are already overworked in a highly stressful and sensitive job. Reducing staffing at the ports of entry will only aggravate the situation for CBP personnel. And the reassignments are starting by the end of this week!

Our ports of entry need and deserve the same level of attention and resource allocation. We urge you to work with your colleagues in Congress to express our deep concerns to Customs and Border Protection that removing inspectors from the ports of entry will have detrimental impacts to our nation's security, our economic wellbeing and the very future of our community and the nation.

We thank you for the attention you give to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,



Robert Uribe
Mayor

CC: The Honorable Doug Ducey, Governor
Arizona Congressional Delegation
Debbie Johnson, Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
Sandra Watson, Director, Arizona Commerce Authority
John Halikowski, Director, Arizona Department of Transportation
Gilbert Orrantia, Director, Arizona Department of Homeland Security