

April 3, 2019

The Honorable Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

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

Dear Ranking Member Peters and Senator Cornyn,

Thank you for your leadership in addressing our nation's CBP workforce crisis with the introduction of the Securing America's Ports of Entry Act of 2019. CBP staffing at our nation's seaports is a top priority for the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA). We strongly support that your legislation requires, at a minimum, hiring 600 new CBP officers annually, above attrition.

Nowhere is the need for a sustainable and robust CBP workforce more apparent than at our nation's seaports. Each year, roughly 1.2 billion metric tons of foreign trade cargo including more than 26 million cargo containers arrive at our seaports, and over 12 million international passengers begin their cruises via U.S. seaports.

As our ports' freight and passenger volumes steadily increase, CBP struggles to meet mandated staffing levels, putting greater stress on our national supply chain and freight network. Ports from every region in the country have raised CBP staffing as a top concern that impacts the freight and passenger facilitation at their ports. While CBP staffing shortages at ports can have a devastating impact on a local and regional economy, the impacts are national in scope. Since 2001, freight and passenger volumes have increased significantly at U.S. ports. For example, between 2001 and 2017, container volumes increased by 71 percent, total foreign trade in short tons increased by 37 percent and passenger traffic at U.S. cruise ports increased by 98 percent.

To highlight this point, in FY 2015, when CBP was funded to hire 2,000 additional staff, fewer than 20 agents were assigned to seaports. This inequity of CBP resources cannot continue. Our nation's ports are in partnership with CBP in securing our supply chain and providing vital support in moving freight safely through our ports and out on to the national freight network. We applaud your legislation, as it seeks to fund and staff CBP at needed levels while envisioning the evolving needs of CBP to facilitate rising freight and passenger services.

The role CBP plays at our seaports is unique and cannot be overstated. We strongly support that your legislation requires, at a minimum, hiring 600 new CBP officers annually, above attrition, as well as requiring a GAO report that seeks solutions to comprehensively reform the CBP hiring process. Additionally, we strongly support the language that requires CBP to consider volume from seasonal surges, other projected changes in commercial and passenger volumes, the most current commercial forecasts and other relevant information into its Workload Staffing Model. Additionally, we are very

encouraged by the language that would require CBP to provide quarterly reports that track temporary duty assignments, the use of reimbursable services agreements and how these resources are being used.

This bill is a positive step to expand CBP staffing to the needed levels. AAPA looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on this urgent issue as you move this legislation forward in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt J. Nagle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kurt J. Nagle
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito, Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
The Honorable Jon Tester, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee
on Homeland Security
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader