July 7, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran

Chairman

Senate Committee on Appropriations

113 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510-2402

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen

Chairman

House Committee on Appropriations

2306 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515-3011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

Vice Chairman

Senate Committee on Appropriations

437 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey

Ranking Member

House Committee on Appropriations

2365 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey,

As you begin the difficult task of drafting the Fiscal Year 2018 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, we urge you to include the $121,848,000 requested by the General Services Administration for the construction of the Otay Mesa Port of Entry Passenger and Cargo Modernization Project.

The project includes expansion and construction of additional non-commercial primary inspection booths, pedestrian processing facilities, surface or structured parking for employees and visitors, and a commercial annex building, relocation of detention and Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) facilities and hazardous material processing, and improvements to the commercial import lot. The project will meet the current and future operational requirements of the federal agencies. Non-commercial pedestrian processing is undersized and the planned development of a new locally developed transit center (adjacent to the land port of entry) is expected to significantly increase the congestion in the pedestrian processing facilities. Detention areas in the main building do not meet current CBP design guidelines and expose the traveling public and officers to unnecessary risk.

Each day tens of thousands of commercial vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit-users, and motorists depend upon these border crossings for safe and timely travel. Long wait times result in lost economic opportunities and negative environmental impacts. In 2009 alone, the Otay Mesa Port of Entry handled more than 1.4 million trucks and $31 billion worth of goods and that number has only increased in the intervening years. Cross-border commerce and trade transcend the border region with substantial impact on our national economy, and continue to represent a growth opportunity for businesses nationwide. General Services Administration has pledged their strong support for the project and has agreed that it should be a high priority. We urge you to consider the positive impact an efficient border can have on our national economy and respectfully request that you include funding for the Otay Mesa Port of Entry Passenger and Cargo Modernization Project.

If you have any questions, please xxxxxxx, at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

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