

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
The Honorable Scott Peters  
The Honorable Sara Jacobs  
The Honorable Darrell Issa  
The Honorable Mike Levin

RE: Support H.R. 3135, the Land Port of Entry (LPOE) Modernization Trust Fund Act

Dear Representatives:

On behalf of a coalition of business and civic organizations and speaking for a variety of industries and over 2,300 small, medium, and large employers in the San Diego region, we write to urge your support and the swift passage of H.R. 3135 to establish the Land Port of Entry Modernization Trust Fund. We understand first-hand the importance of efficient land ports of entry and the positive impact they have on our economy and the quality of life of our residents. Furthermore, we share your commitment to ensure that our borders remain safe and efficient for all users while enhancing our global competitiveness through the facilitation of legitimate travel and trade.

As the home to the busiest land port of entry in the Western Hemisphere, over 58,000 people cross the border to work each day. In fact, the San Ysidro Port of Entry alone processes up to 100,000 travelers (via passenger vehicles and over 20,000 pedestrians each day) while the Otay Mesa Commercial Port of Entry experiences an estimated 7,000-9,000 truck crossings. Our region has reached important milestones by securing over \$1B in funding for border infrastructure improvements to facilitate trade and travel. However, border wait times continue to be an important challenge, with passenger vehicles waiting up to 4 hours and twice as much for cargo. If the current situation persists, or worsens, it will force our companies to shift their supply chains to another part of the world, increase unemployment, and escalate the cost of consumer goods.

H.R. 3135 will establish a trust fund to support the essential needs for land ports:

- (1) Construct new ports of entry;
- (2) Expand and improve existing ports of entry;
- (3) Procure technology for inspecting and processing traffic passing through ports of entry; and
- (4) Hire U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staff and help fill vacancies at regional ports of entry.

While waterway-based ports of entry have long had the benefit of a consistent source of federal resources via the authorization of a similar trust fund, our overburdened land-based ports of entry have struggled. The LPOE Modernization Trust Fund Act is needed to properly redistribute much needed resources to LPOE facilities and to ensure our nation's long-term economic prosperity through international trade.

The LPOE Trust Fund will expand, improve, and construct new U.S. ports of entry and support infrastructure to accommodate high volumes of commercial, vehicle, and pedestrian traffic. It will also help critical transit and trade facilities more efficiently complete the inspection and processing of commercial, vehicle, and pedestrian traffic.

Securing continued investment in border infrastructure and technology and increasing CBP staff to improve operations and reduce border wait times is a critical priority. Our organizations frequently ask the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and CBP to identify current and future staffing and funding needs to guarantee an efficient, reliable, and secure border that facilitates trade and tourism while also prioritizing national security. Our community and businesses rely on the certainty that our ports will have the resources needed to ensure our border remain safe and efficient for all users.

Advancing efforts to reduce border wait times and introducing or supporting bills such as H.R. 3135 which advance much needed enhancement to LPOE are concrete actions that each of you can take to ensure the success of our border region as a key economic driver of the U.S. economy. We thank you for your leadership on this important matter and request that you to confirm your position on this bill. Your office can count on each of the undersigned business organizations as a resource and close partner.

Sincerely,



Alejandra Mier y Teran  
Executive Director  
Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce



Jerry Sanders  
President and CEO  
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce



Jason Wells  
Executive Director  
San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce



Joaquin Luken  
Executive Director  
Smart Border Coalition