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July 20, 2012

The Honorable David Aguilar
Chief
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Chief Aguilar,

On June 22, 2012, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced that it will shut down nine Border Patrol stations across four states. Based on the Administration's announcement, key stations, including but not limited to Dallas, San Angelo, Abilene, San Antonio, and Riverside (California), are to close. We are highly concerned that these closures will undercut proven methods to intercept drug smugglers, human traffickers and illegal immigrants in corridors they use extensively north of the U.S.-Mexico border. We urge you in the strongest terms to rescind the decision.

Your agency has asserted that it is closing these stations in order to reassign agents to higher-priority areas closer to the border. Your agency further claims that these deactivations are consistent with the strategic goal of securing our borders and CBP's objective of increasing and sustaining the certainty of arrest of those trying to enter our country illegally. CBP claims these closures will maximize the effectiveness of its enforcement resources and align its investments with its mission. However, we have serious grounds for believing these claims are simply wrong.

The affected stations are scattered throughout northern and central Texas and three other states. These stations were placed in these locations because they were and remain high-volume travel corridors for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers who successfully cross the border without apprehension. By way of example, one soon-to-be-closed station is located in Amarillo, Texas, in the middle of the I-40 corridor. Another station is located in Riverside, California. This station, east of Los Angeles, effectively intercepts illegal immigrants and drug smugglers heading towards Los Angeles, who due to traffic patterns, often avoid traveling the I-5 and then are able to enter into the interior to escape notice.

These stations have proven exceedingly effective in seizing millions of dollars in drugs and thousands of illegal immigrants. With key stations closing, it will be much easier for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers to reach their intended destinations in the interior if they succeed in crossing the border undetected.

Additionally, local officials are concerned about what will happen once the Border Patrol stations shut their doors, as local law enforcement rely on these stations and the relationships they have built with CBP agents over time to assist when they make arrests of illegal immigrants. The change "could impact us tremendously since we've only got two agents up here now for 26 counties," Potter County, Texas. Sheriff Brian Thomas stated in the media. These stations are present along major corridors for illegal immigrants and local law enforcement depends on Border Patrol to respond to their calls. Local officials will have great difficulty serving their constituents if they are forced to reach out to the Border Patrol stations that are many hours away. To make matters worse, there seems to be no active plan in place for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to fill the void CBP will leave behind.

Fears have also been expressed that your plan is part of a systematic attempt to dismantle interior enforcement of our immigration laws and give illegal immigrants a "free pass" should they successfully cross the border.

We ask that you abandon this plan to deactivate these Border Patrol stations. However, if you insist on moving forward with this plan, please provide in writing CBP's proposal for assisting the affected local law enforcement agencies.

In addition, please answer the following questions and provide the requested documents:

- What is the expected date of the deactivation of the nine facilities?
- A fiscal year 2010 efficiency review was used to determine what stations should be closed. Please provide a copy of that document. What was the methodology of the review and metrics that were considered?
- What was the number of alien apprehensions last year for each station and amount of money obtained in seizures, drugs, etc?
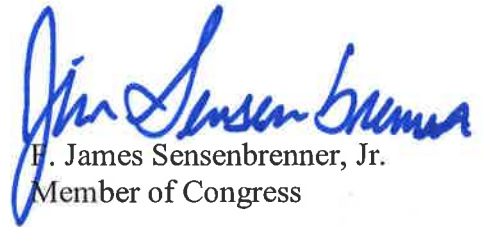- Where will the agents from the deactivated stations be moved to?

The Honorable David Aguilar
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Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement Counsel Dimple Shah at 202-226-3926 should you have any additional questions or concerns.
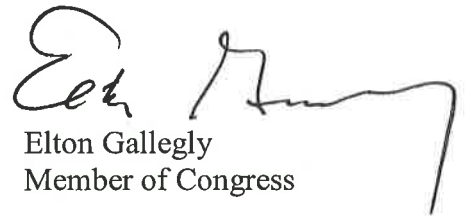

Sincerely,

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