



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2019

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We write to you to highlight the need for enhanced technology at ports of entry (POEs) along the southern border and to inquire about the technology acquisition and deployment process of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's 2018 National Drug Threat Assessment, Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) have the largest drug trafficking influence in the United States. While drug trafficking is widespread across the U.S. northern and southern borders, TCOs transport the majority of their illegal drugs through the southwest border, most commonly through privately owned vehicles or tractor trailers entering the United States at POEs.

Every day, thousands of vehicles use existing U.S.-Mexico border crossings, increasing pressure on CBP personnel to intercept contraband without impacting the flow of legitimate commerce. While many seizures along the southwest border are interdicted at land POEs, only a small percentage of vehicles entering the U.S. at POEs are scanned for contraband using non-intrusive inspection (NII) equipment.

The recently passed FY19 Homeland Security Appropriations bill (P.L. 116-6) provided \$570 million for the acquisition and deployment of NII equipment at land POEs. We believe it is critical DHS utilizes this funding expeditiously to increase the percentage of scanned vehicles coming in through the southwest border, as this will enhance the safety of communities across the U.S. that are suffering from the illicit drug trade as well as augment the efficiency of our CBP officers in the frontlines.

To ensure that the funding Congress provided to CBP is being used to increase security at POEs in an impactful and expedient manner, we ask you to respond to the following questions:

- How much of the \$570 million appropriated by Congress will be used to acquire and deploy NII technology to POEs along the southwest border?
- How will CBP determine to which POEs to deploy NII technology?
- Is CBP considering deploying NII technology to POEs along rural and low-traffic sections of the southwest border to ensure that TCOs do not shift their smuggling targets to less frequented and low-resource POEs?
- Has CBP created an acquisition and deployment schedule for the technology to be purchased with FY19 funds?
- What are the challenges, if any, CBP faces as it plans to increase the percentage of vehicles scanned with NII technology?

We ask that you provide responses to these questions no later than May 3, 2019. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



XOCHITL TORRES SMALL
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Oversight, Management,
and Accountability



DAN CRENSHAW
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight, Management,
and Accountability