

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 9, 2009

Mr. Jayson P. Ahern
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Department of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Commissioner Ahern:

We are writing to respectfully request that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) prioritize funding for the construction of two new passenger vehicle lanes at the Santa Teresa Port of Entry in New Mexico, and increase the commercial hours of operation until midnight on weekdays.

Building two additional passenger lanes will allow the port to better accommodate current and future traffic generated by a new road from Cd. Juárez to San Jerónimo, the sister port of Santa Teresa, and the rapidly expanding economic development in the area. The new road was recently built on the Mexican side of the border to allow individuals to easily cross into the United States through the San Jerónimo-Santa Teresa ports and to bypass the busy Juárez-El Paso corridor. The road has reduced the travel time from Cd. Juárez to the San Jerónimo port from approximately one hour to about 15 minutes, and Mexican officials are currently in the process of paving the road and expanding it from two lanes to at least six lanes.

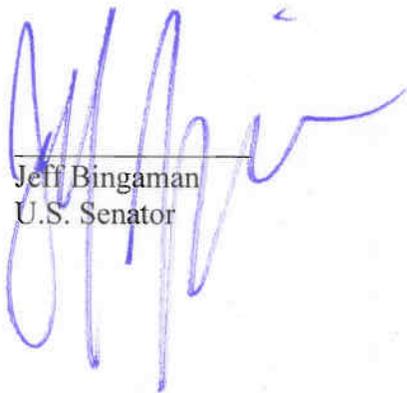
Additional lanes at Santa Teresa will also help alleviate long lines of traffic which already plague the port, particularly during holidays when the wait time can reach three to four hours. Enhancing the capacity of the Santa Teresa port is also important since it serves as an emergency relief route for El Paso. Lastly, because the construction of additional lanes at the port does not require building a bridge over the Rio Grande river, it is a cost-effective way to increase overall port capacity in the region. It is our understanding that the cost of the additional lanes and booths will be approximately \$4 million.

In addition to the increase in passenger vehicle crossings, commercial traffic is also continuing to increase as industries establish facilities in the area. For example, in early 2009 a Taiwanese computer manufacturing company began major operations just across from the Santa Teresa port. The facility, which currently employs about 4,300 people, is expected to employ 10,000 workers by March of 2010. As a result of this expansion, the manufacturing company anticipates that it will be sending over 200 northbound trucks per day by this October, which is twice the total number of trucks that crossed the port each day prior to the company beginning operations.

The company's presence is serving as a magnet for businesses on both sides of the border and it is essential that the port's commercial hours of operation be adjusted to accommodate this growth and to facilitate bilateral trade. Santa Teresa's existing commercial hours are 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. on weekdays. Extending commercial hours until midnight on weekdays would allow the manufacturer to ship its second shift production materials through the port while meeting the one-hour pre-notification required by CBP for incoming commercial traffic.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

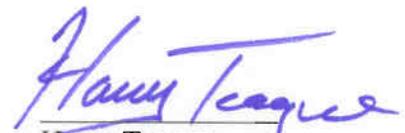
Sincerely,



Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senator



Tom Udall
U.S. Senator



Harry Teague
Member of Congress