



1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20229

## U.S. Customs and Border Protection

*Commissioner*

September 19, 2022

The Honorable John Hoeven  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hoeven:

Thank you for your July 27, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security requesting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) restore full operation hours at all ports of entry (POEs) in North Dakota.

For several years, CBP has documented a reduction in privately owned vehicle and pedestrian traffic along our northern border, and CBP's obligation is to utilize all resources responsibly and efficiently to perform our mission of safeguarding the homeland. The 10 POEs in North Dakota identified to maintain reduced hours based on traffic volume are: Carbury, Fortuna, Maida, Neche, Noonan, Northgate, Sherwood, St. John, Walhalla and Westhope. These are small, two-officer locations with minimal traffic during the hours of the proposed reduction, an average of 2.6 vehicles per hour per location during Fiscal Year 2019.

CBP continuously evaluates workload, staffing, operating costs, and traffic volumes at all POEs. The continued reduction of operating hours aligns with a CBP-wide effort to optimize service, not only in North Dakota, but along all the Nation's land borders. The necessary reduction of late-night hours at POEs with little or no traffic enables CBP to align additional staffing during peak hours, in turn allowing CBP to better serve the public and protect our country.

In addition, CBP port hours in North Dakota align with those of our counterparts in the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). If CBP agreed to unilaterally return to longer hours of service, CBSA would have to agree to open an unattended southbound gate; additionally, there is no guarantee CBSA would agree to accept northbound traffic.

You recently spoke with CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO) leadership regarding the North Dakota POEs hours of reduction. As a result of that conversation, OFO leadership has agreed to temporarily expand hours at three high-priority POEs, including Maida, Northgate, and Sherwood, for 120 days to further analyze the impacts on operations. All three POEs are currently operating at 8 hours per day from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and would expand hours to 10 hours per day, from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Upon conclusion of this temporary expansion, the Seattle Field Office will evaluate the traffic volume and make a recommendation to OFO leadership on the path forward for these three locations.

The Honorable John Hoeven

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The co-signers of your letter will receive an identical response. Should you need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me, or have a member of your staff contact Stephanie A. Talton, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Congressional Affairs at 202-344-1760.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'C' followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small loop.

Chris Magnus  
Commissioner