

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2022

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Homeland Security
128 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Homeland Security
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murphy and Ranking Member Capito:

As senators representing states along the U.S.-Canada border, we write to express our support for including in the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Homeland Security appropriations legislation, the necessary resources to properly staff and secure our northern border. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your work on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

We support ensuring that our border professionals have the personnel, technology, and tools necessary to secure both our southwest border and the northern border. In doing so, it is important that the federal government effectively carry out its responsibility to safely and effectively secure both of our land borders. That is why we urge you to dedicate the needed resources to secure our border with Canada.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and U.S. Border Patrol agents have the critical mission of protecting the American people by securing our borders. Succeeding at this mission involves much sacrifice by these officers and agents as well as their families. We should ensure that these border security professionals have the resources needed to adequately staff the northern border. CBP officers and Border Patrol agents continue to be transferred from the northern border in order to assist along the U.S.-Mexico border. These continual temporary duty assignments take a significant toll on officers and agents as well as families assigned to northern border duties. We encourage this subcommittee to provide the necessary resources to ensure personnel on the northern border can fulfill their mission without the constant need for temporary duty assignments. Additionally, recruitment and retention of Customs and Border Protection officers and Border Patrol agents continues to prove challenging, in particular when attempting to fill posts along the northern border. We therefore urge the subcommittee to provide Customs and Border Protection and the Border Patrol with the resources needed to recruit and retain personnel, including resources for creative solutions to incentivize officers and agents to fill posts on the northern border.

Further, by making investments in technology that can help monitor our northern border, we can better assist border professionals as they work to prioritize staffing needs while at the same time allowing for more situational awareness. Technology can play a critical role, especially given the remoteness of many areas along our border with Canada. A majority of the northern border is currently monitored with systems that must be manually operated, requiring consistent staffing to ensure full situational awareness. Investing in technology that allows agents to patrol and more quickly respond to activity is a much-needed investment. For example, the subcommittee has funded autonomous surveillance towers, which have proven to be a successful tool at monitoring activity. Two such towers have been deployed along the northern border in the Swanton Sector, covering Vermont and New York, and the Havre Sector, covering Montana. These towers have proven to be an effective method for monitoring our northern border, even in cold temperatures. We therefore encourage the subcommittee to prioritize funding for additional towers that can be placed strategically along the northern border.

Finally, essential to both the security of our northern border and to ensuring the smooth flow of people and goods, is having ports of entry open to accommodate lawful travel between the United States and Canada. Hours at northern border ports of entry were reduced with the dramatic decrease in travel seen at the height of the COVID-19 public health emergency. As we turn the corner on the pandemic, the subcommittee should ensure that CBP has the necessary resources to resume pre-pandemic operating hours at northern border ports of entry, and encourage the resumption of normal operating hours.

We appreciate the subcommittee’s attention to these important issues along our northern border and we look forward to working with you as the FY23 appropriations process advances. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



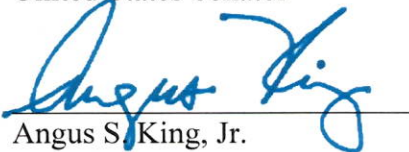
John Hoeven
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



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