

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE: IMPROVING SECURITY, TRADE,  
TRAVEL FLOWS AT THE SOUTHWEST BORDER PORTS OF ENTRY**

**STATEMENT OF**

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**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND  
BORDER MANAGEMENT**

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**Introduction**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Sinema, Ranking Member Lankford, and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Stuart Burns, and I am Assistant Commissioner for Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement at the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Public Buildings Service. Thank you for inviting me to this hearing titled "Federal Government Perspective: Improving Security, Trade, and Travel Flows at the Southwest Border Ports of Entry."

GSA's mission is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to the government and the American people. As part of this mission, GSA has a close partnership with the Department of Homeland Security – Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other Federal inspection agencies like the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and Humans Services – Food Drug Administration, and the Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to meet the Federal Government's real estate and technology

needs along our Nation's borders. As you know, CBP is our primary partner among the many Federal inspection agencies stationed along America's land borders and it is critical that they have modern facilities to perform their critical mission of safeguarding our borders, and enhancing the Nation's economic prosperity.

Investment in new and existing land ports of entry strengthens trade, tourism and commerce; creates jobs; and bolsters our Nation's security. As a result, GSA works closely with our Federal partners and others to deliver these land ports to accomplish these objectives.

### **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

I would like to thank Chairwoman Sinema and other members of the Subcommittee for their work to include funding for LPOEs in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal), which the President signed into law on Monday of this week. Now that the legislation is enacted, GSA will work with CBP and our other partners, to construct new and modernize existing LPOEs at dozens of locations on the northern and southern border. Additionally, GSA will undertake paving projects to improve road infrastructure within and leading to and from LPOEs, as well as seek to acquire some privately-owned LPOEs that the government currently leases and bring them into the Federally-owned inventory. These critical investments will provide modern and energy efficient facilities for Federal inspection agencies, and benefit our state, local and private sector partners. The \$3.4 billion provided to GSA and \$400 million provided to CBP will address critical infrastructure priorities for our country, and eliminate a substantial backlog of outstanding projects.

### **Cost-Effective Project Delivery**

GSA is well positioned to undertake and deliver an LPOE program. We have a consistent track record of delivering capital projects on time and on budget. Our successes are the result of leveraging project resources and subject matter experts across GSA, and ensuring the best team is assigned to each project. This approach

results in the application of industry best practices in site selection, environmental analysis, design, construction and delivery of these facilities. This collaborative team approach has contributed to the success of many projects.

### **GSA's Partnership with CBP**

GSA works closely with CBP to design, construct, maintain, and operate land ports of entry along more than 1,900 miles of border between the United States and Mexico, and more than 5,500 miles of border between the United States and Canada.

Safe, secure, and modern land ports along our borders are critical to ensuring an efficient flow of commerce and people that support jobs and economic growth.

Of the 167 land ports of entry along the U.S. borders, GSA manages 123, of which the Government owns 101, leases 19, and partially owns three. GSA's land ports of entry serve diverse mission needs at a diverse set of locations that include urban communities like San Diego, California; El Paso, Texas; and Detroit, Michigan; as well as remote localities like Douglas, Arizona, Van Buren, Maine and Alcan, Alaska.

However, the average LPOE in GSA's portfolio was designed and constructed more than 40 years ago. As a result, many of these facilities are functionally obsolete for the 21st century. This in turn has a negative effect on American trade, tourism, commerce, jobs and national security.

To inform and facilitate investment in LPOEs, GSA coordinates and assists CBP in evaluating and prioritizing facilities for investment priorities.

This process has resulted in significant investments in LPOEs at Calexico and San Ysidro (the Nation's busiest land port), California; Columbus, New Mexico; Tornillo and Laredo, Texas; and Alexandria Bay, New York over the last five years.

GSA works closely with CBP to ensure CBP's priority projects are integrated into GSA's larger multiyear priority plan. GSA works with CBP during the annual budget formulation process to request funding to invest in LPOEs.

As part of the multi-year plan, GSA consults with CBP and other stakeholder agencies, such as FMCSA, at the onset of project planning and continue this relationship throughout project development and execution. An example of this partnership in practice was the expansion and modernization of the San Ysidro LPOE in California where GSA incorporated each agencies' program of requirements into the modernized facility. Additionally, CBP and GSA are partners in the border master planning process on the U.S. - Mexico border. In addition to coordination with state and local agencies, the border master planning process also includes Mexican Federal, state, and local government entities, as well as other Federal agencies including the Department of State, Department of Transportation, and, when appropriate, private partners (railroads, for example). The resulting Border Master Plan is a listing of project priorities that state and local governments rank regionally and provide guidance to help the Federal Government rank projects nationally.

With respect to land ports at the northern border, GSA again works closely with the Department of State to coordinate with the Canadian government.

Furthermore, GSA and CBP partner with State and local governments and private sector entities under the Donation Acceptance Program to improve and expand port of entry infrastructure and technology.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about GSA's ongoing partnership with CBP and others to deliver modern land ports of entry facilities on the northern and southern border, and the historic opportunity that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal presents to bring these critical facilities into the 21st century. I welcome the opportunity

to discuss GSA's commitment to strategic investment in our Nation's land ports of entry, and am happy to answer any questions you may have.