

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 3, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

As you consider your Fiscal Year 2017 budget plans, we request that you make the expansion of the Blue Water Bridge Customs Plaza in Port Huron, Michigan, a high priority by supporting the strongest possible funding of the Facility Construction and Sustainment account at U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The Blue Water Bridge is the United States third busiest land crossing in terms of value of shipments. Focused investment in modern infrastructure and technology at our busiest land ports of entry, such as the Blue Water Bridge, is essential to our economic well-being and security.

In 2011, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama declared in *Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness* their commitment to significant investments in physical infrastructure at key crossings to relieve congestion and speed the movement of traffic across the border. The Blue Water Bridge was identified as a top priority within that plan.

The Blue Water Bridge is a vital component of economic expansion for the communities of Port Huron, and St. Clair County; the state of Michigan, and the nation as a whole.

Locally, delay of the expansion of the Blue Water Bridge Customs Plaza continues to create hardship by impacting the tax bases in Saint Clair County and Port Huron. More than 100 properties were demolished to prepare the land for expansion, yet it continues to sit idle. These communities are negatively impacted by the loss of potential revenue as the land required for the plaza expansion sits vacant. Port Huron's bond rating has been negatively impacted due to a lack of revenue from the plaza. New revenue gained from construction and operation of the customs plaza would help offset the years of lost property tax revenue.

Nationally, it is important to the economic security and well-being of the United States to complete the planned expansion of the Blue Water Bridge Customs Plaza. Once fully staffed and operational, this improved border crossing will have a significant economic impact for Michigan and states across the country. This plaza will greatly expedite travel for both commercial and non-commercial traffic, as the temporary booths that were installed were not intended to be a permanent solution, and have not mitigated the traffic problems to the extent they should have.

We thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress