

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 5, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, SW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan,

We are writing to express concerns regarding the reassignment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers from the New York metropolitan area to the southern border of the United States. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey including the region's major airports and marine terminals are reportedly losing over 50 CBP officers as a part of a nation-wide reassignment of several hundred CBP officers from airports and seaports to the southern border.

With the busy summer travel season underway, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) is projecting a record number of passengers traveling through their four major airports including over two million this past weekend alone. At the same time, the Port of New York and New Jersey is also expecting an increase in the volume of cargo in the coming weeks. CBP staff reductions and reassignments represent another strain on the Port of New York and New Jersey that is already at a competitive disadvantage compared to other ports because of an inconsistent implementation of the Reimbursable Services Program for marine terminal operators. West Coast ports such as Long Beach and Los Angeles operating 24 hours a day/, seven days a week have custom services covered under CBP's operating budget and Port of New York and New Jersey marine terminal operators are required to pay for Saturday custom services, that were previously covered under CBP's operating budget.

The most populous metropolitan region in the United States and one of the most important economic regions in the world faces an enormous volume of passengers and cargo that require a robust CBP presence to ensure the safety and security of the United States. For instance, in March 2019, the CBP, with the support of other federal agencies successfully, executed the largest drug bust in 25 years at the port of Newark. The New York/New Jersey metropolitan area faces daily threats that require substantial resources and staff. In order to ensure that CBP is taking all necessary steps to secure the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area and the entire United States, we respectfully request prompt responses to the following questions:

1. Can you please describe in detail what resources and staff you have redirected or plan to redirect from the Port of New York and New Jersey and the region's four major airports to the southern border?

2. How long do you anticipate diverting staff and resources from the Port of New York and New Jersey and the region's four major airports to the southern border?
3. In light of the record number of travelers expected in our region's four major airports as the busy summer travel season begins, what anticipated impact will the CBP reassignment have at our region's airports?
4. In light of the expected increase in volume of cargo coming into the Port of New York and New Jersey and the recent example of substantial illegal drug activity at the port of Newark, what is the anticipated impact of the CBP reassignment at the Port of New York and New Jersey?
5. Can you please explain why terminals such as the Port Newark Container Terminal is now required to pay for custom services for Saturday rail operations through the Reimbursable Service Program when these services were previously covered under the CBP operating budget?
6. What are the plans for CBP to work with marine terminal operators to ensure that the Reimbursable Service Program is administered with the same standards for all ports?

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker  
U.S. Senator



Robert Menendez  
U.S. Senator



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Robert Kennedy

1964

John F. Kennedy

1964