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27TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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October 31, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20393

The Honorable Alan Bersin  
Commissioner  
Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NY  
Washington, D.C. 20229

**Re: Peace Bridge Capacity Expansion Project**

Secretary Napolitano and Commissioner Bersin,

In June, I received from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) a commitment to support a smaller footprint for the Peace Bridge Land Port of Entry and work with the Peace Bridge Authority (PBA) so that they have the guidance necessary to begin this project expeditiously. I am concerned that months later, there has been no demonstrable progress on these negotiations between CBP and the PBA.

It is with regret and frustration that I am compelled to point out that we have been here before with this Department and its representative agencies. Last year, we faced delay after delay from officials within DHS and CBP on ascertaining whether support could be committed to a plaza plan that was crafted pursuant to CBP's specifications. Only after significant pressure was there finally a response that the Agency could not commit to the proposal. This dashed years of planning and funding put forth by the PBA and the State of New York.

Now I fear here we are at a similar crossroads again. A new proposal sits before you that will improve the project by implementing prescreening of trucks on the Canadian side of the bridge and has the universal support of the Western New York Congressional delegation and a broad cross-section of the community. Yet, from all accounts, your department continues to move at a glacial pace in giving the PBA guidance on exactly what specifications are necessary to approve the prescreening plan.

Frankly, the community that I serve in Buffalo and Western New York deserves more. And given the significant amount of effort we have put forth to explain how absolutely crucial this project is to the region's future, I expect a much greater degree of activity from your staff. It is not an overstatement to say that our regional economy hangs in the balance, nor is it too much to expect the federal government to recognize this and act with a corresponding level of enthusiasm.

Therefore I respectfully and strongly request that DHS and CBP engage in serious discussions with the PBA on in furtherance of moving toward a final plan for the plaza and prescreening lanes that will allow this project to advance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS  
Member of Congress

Cc: Robert A. Peck, Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration