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February 7, 2011

The Honorable Alan Bersin  
Commissioner  
Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20229

**Re: Peace Bridge Expansion Project**

Dear Commissioner Bersin,

When we spoke regarding the Peace Bridge Expansion Project in 2010, we agreed to work collaboratively to assure that the planning process on the Peace Bridge project proceeds at the most expeditious rate possible. I write you today seeking a renewal of that commitment, and I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you shortly to discuss the importance of the project to the future of the community I represent in Buffalo and Western New York. This request has added urgency given the renewed focus President Obama has placed on infrastructure and security at our Northern Border.

As you know, the Peace Bridge Land Port of Entry is one of the busiest at the Northern Border. It is also woefully inadequate to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Your agency has cited these inadequacies in the past, including lack of plaza exit controls to manage emergent fugitive scenarios, insufficient space for the inspection of busses and commercial trucks, the lack of animal inspection facilities, the complete lack of an outbound inspection facility, inadequate secondary inspection facilities, and lack of "Non-Intrusive Inspection" staging areas. The proposed plaza plan, long deliberated upon between your agency and project sponsors, addresses these glaring weaknesses.

Along with the necessity of a modern Land Port of Entry at the Peace Bridge to secure our border, the Expansion Project is a long overdue and critical enhancement to a vital economic asset. More than \$30 billion in trade moves across the Peace Bridge every year, and that trade is linked to \$227.4 billion in economic generation at companies that do business in the United States, supporting 1 million jobs.

Businesses in Western New York and around the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions benefit from this trade linkage – Southern Ontario has one of the most vibrant and rapidly growing economies in North America. The Expansion Project will ensure more predictable access for business and provide enhanced opportunities for trade. The project will also result in new and increased access for Western New York institutions to Canadian customers. Small businesses, retailers, cultural institutions, professional sports

franchises, colleges, and our international airport are among the many entities that all stand to directly benefit from the Peace Bridge Expansion Project.

I appreciate your efforts to ensure that our country's Northern Border is safe, secure, and provides ease of access for citizens and business. I look forward to working with you on moving this project forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BRIAN HIGGINS  
Member of Congress