

BRIAN HIGGINS  
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

REGIONAL WHIP

June 15, 2023

Troy A. Miller  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20229

**Re: Northern border in disarray, urgent need to shift resources back.**

Dear Mr. Miller:

The performance of CBP and DHS in managing the U.S. northern border is wholly unacceptable, as evidenced by three related policy failures:

**One: Despite traffic not having recovered to pre-pandemic levels, booths are woefully understaffed.**

Yesterday afternoon, only three of twelve vehicle inspection booths were open at the Peace Bridge, the U.S.' second-busiest Canadian border crossing. Average wait times exceeded an hour. Traffic is currently only at 85% of pre-pandemic levels.

**Two: Unacceptable NEXUS backlogs persist.** The re-opening of Canadian interview sites in March was supposed to be the breakthrough to fix the NEXUS application backlog. The problem now isn't about interviews at all; there is a year-long backlog for preliminary reviews before an interview can even be scheduled. CBP has informed my office that an applicant who applied on February 14 of this year might expect to be invited to apply for an interview in January of next year.

**Three: Overuse of mandatory southern-border details suppresses recruitment and retention of officers.** The position of CBP officer used to be a desirable job for persons aspiring to a law enforcement career in Northern Border communities. Having spoken several times with front-line CBP officers about this issue, CBP's aggressive deployment of northern border officers to the southern border has made the job much less attractive. While CBP has the right to impose these hardships on these officers and their families, doing so with such frequency is a root cause of CBP's recruitment shortfalls. It is unsound border management, and unsound personnel management.

These three issues are all related. Top management at CBP and DHS are badly mismanaging the northern border. Continually shifting resources away from the northern border to address migrant flows that have persisted at the southern border since the 1980s is unsustainable. Canada is our number-one trading partner and our closest ally. Making a mess of the northern border, which CBP and DHS top management have done, causes tangible harm to the economies of border communities and the U.S. generally, and demonstrably injures life quality here along the border.

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I call on you to immediately shift resources back to the northern border to allow for its proper functioning. Further, given the abuses that have taken place, I advise you that I am prepared to introduce legislative measures that would statutorily restrict your ability to pull officers out of northern border booths and send them south.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is stylized with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress