

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 12, 2024

The Honorable Robin Carnahan  
Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration  
1800 F St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20405

Acting Commissioner Troy Miller  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Administrator Carnahan and Acting Commissioner Miller,

I write in strong support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the General Services Administration's (GSA) findings presented on March 6, 2024, to modernize and expand the Santa Teresa Land Port of Entry (STLPOE). I urge you to promptly finalize the STLPOE feasibility study and prioritize this project.

I am pleased that CBP and the GSA recognize the important role southern New Mexico plays in our nation's economy. This smart investment in port infrastructure and border security will help our nation meet the international trade demands of the future, strengthen security at the southern border, and ensure New Mexico's border businesses and communities thrive.

Despite outdated infrastructure and just three northbound commercial lanes, STLPOE has become a critical facilitator of international trade - especially with Mexico, our largest trading partner. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>1</sup> and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics<sup>2</sup>, in the five-year period from 2014 to 2019<sup>3</sup>, STLPOE grew at a yearly average rate of 8.9 percent in total trade value and 9.1 percent in in-bound truck crossings, and continues to grow at a rapid pace each month. That is, in part, why I have consistently advocated that STLPOE be expanded and modernized. Santa Teresa has proven its strategic importance to strengthening the United States' supply chains, facilitating increased domestic production, and improving the economic well-being of New Mexicans and all Americans. Now, we must give STLPOE the resources to become a port of the future.

On March 6, GSA and CBP presented the community with findings for a large-scale expansion and modernization of STLPOE. The number of lanes, docks, and inspection bays included in

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: <https://usatrade.census.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics: Border Crossing/Entry Data: <https://www.bts.dot.gov/browse-statisticalproducts-and-data/border-crossing-data/border-crossingentry-data>

<sup>3</sup> To have an accurate representation of the most recent five-year period, the year 2020 was not included as it was an anomaly year for most ports of entry due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

GSA and CBP's presentation are vital for the port to increase bilateral trade and maintain critical U.S. supply chains. The findings include fifteen northbound commercial lanes, eleven northbound passenger lanes, five southbound lanes, and three dedicated Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) inspection bays. The submission properly recognizes STLPOE as a catalyst of economic growth and development along our southern border. With federal investments in highways that provide faster transportation and a jetport for larger cargo planes to land near the industrial parks, STLPOE and the entire New Mexico Borderplex region are uniquely positioned to accommodate this rapid expansion.

U.S. land ports of entry also act as the front line in our country's fight to interdict and confiscate fentanyl before it enters the U.S. In FY 2023, CBP seized 240,000<sup>4</sup> pounds of drugs at the southern border, which included 1.1 billion doses of fentanyl.<sup>5</sup> Of the 27,000 pounds of fentanyl seized by CBP in FY2023, 26,700 were seized at the southwest border.<sup>6</sup> We must continue to make progress towards achieving the goal of 100% scanning at U.S. land ports of entry and ensure full deployment of the Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) scanning technology at these ports. As you work to quickly finalize the feasibility study for STLPOE, I urge you to include recommendations detailing large-scale investments in innovative screening and fentanyl interdiction-related technologies so that officers there can more accurately, swiftly, and safely detect illicit substances and other contraband.

I strongly support the expansion and modernization of STLPOE and respectfully request that GSA immediately finalize the feasibility study and prioritize this project. STLPOE can serve as a model for land ports along the southern border, and these improvements are necessary to ensure our nation's supply chain stability, enhance border security, and spur economic growth in our border communities.

Sincerely,



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MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-drugs-dosage-value-and-weight>

<sup>6</sup> Per CBP data, in FY 2023, out of 549,000 pounds of drugs seized, 240,000 pounds were seized at the southwest land border; out of 27,000 pounds of fentanyl seized, 26,700 pounds were seized at the southwest land border