

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2023

Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

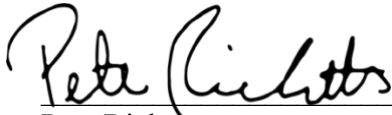
We write today to express our serious concern with the Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) recent actions to suspend international railway crossings and rail operations in Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas. On December 18, 2023, CBP pulled personnel from those operations and redirected them to assist with the migrant surges at the southwest border. In recent weeks, CBP has also suspended vehicle processing at Eagle Pass International Bridge 1 and operations at California's San Ysidro Pedestrian West and Arizona's Lukeville Port of Entry. Without putting real policies in place to cut the increasing flow of illegal immigration, our national security and economy will continue to pay the price.

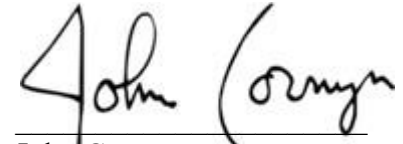
We are living in the worst border crisis on record. There have now been over 6.6 million encounters at the southern border since President Biden took office—not including the approximately 1.8 million “gotaways” who were detected but never apprehended. Just on December 5, 2023, CBP reported 12,000 migrant encounters, the highest total for a single day ever recorded. Failure upon failure, your office continues to ignore real solutions to an increasingly urgent crisis, one that is now causing significant disruptions to our supply chain.


CBP's decision to suspend rail service and close international crossings at Eagle Pass and El Paso directly and immediately impacts our carriers' ability to move goods across the North American rail network and to the North American consumers who rely on them. The success of our trade partnership with Mexico relies on the successful operation of these international railway crossings. U.S. goods and services trade with Mexico totaled an estimated \$855.1 billion in 2022. Eagle Pass and El Paso accounted for a total of \$33.95 billion or 35.8% of all cross-border rail traffic to and from Mexico in the last year. This includes products such as grains, consumer goods, automobiles and auto parts, and chemicals. In 2021, the U.S. exported more than \$2.6 billion of soybeans and more than \$4.7 billion of corn to Mexico. American producers and consumers will suffer daily as long as these entry points are closed.


The crisis at our nation's southern border is unprecedented and is the worst it has ever been in our country's history. Only smarter and effective policies will guide us out of it and without a real plan, this Administration will hardly address the substantial challenges that currently exist. Redirecting a small group of CBP personnel away from these rail entries will not do anything to get us closer to a solution. We urge you to reopen the rail ports of entry at Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas. Further, we urge you to take this humanitarian, security, and economic crisis seriously and engage with Congress to enact real policy change that stops the flow of illegal migration.


Sincerely,


Pete Ricketts
United States Senator


John Cornyn
United States Senator



Katie Boyd Britt
United States Senator


Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator


Roger Marshall, M.D
United States Senator


Thom Tillis
United States Senator


Jerry Moran
United States Senator


Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator