

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We write to urge for the reauthorization of the Donations Acceptance Program (DAP). The DAP is essential to the economy of border communities in our districts, and a lapse in the program's authorization would jeopardize the growth of ports of entry (POEs) nationwide.

The DAP, originally authorized in the Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act of 2016, allows the General Services Administration (GSA) and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to accept donations for construction, alterations, maintenance and operation projects at POEs. Since its inception, the DAP has entered into 40 partnerships, leveraging investments worth \$219 million in POEs, primarily on the southwest border.

While the program has proved successful in expanding POEs, a sunset provision within the DAP's statutory authority would terminate CBP's ability to enter into agreements to accept donations starting December 16, 2020. If Congress does not act prior to the program's expiration, seven ongoing projects, with an estimated donation value of \$61,588,880, will be jeopardized.

Two of the seven investments potentially impacted are infrastructure projects at the Santa Teresa POE worth over \$1.5 million. The Santa Teresa POE, which in 2019 processed \$30.5 billion in exported and imported goods and currently ranks sixth in total trade for all land POEs in the country, has not been modernized since its initial construction 23 years ago. The two infrastructure projects funded by the DAP would make essential alterations to the port's infrastructure to ensure it can meet increased trade demand and continue its growth.

Through this program, the City of Pharr, Texas will help fund, among other things, the construction of 24 new secondary inspection bays, enhancing CBP's ability to process future increases in commercial truck traffic at the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge. Thirteen of these bays will include cold storage unit equipment to ensure that produce examinations will not be compromised by the outside elements. This project is about efficiency in trade, and the upgraded facility will enhance the speed of CBP agriculture inspectors tasked with on-site inspections and testing, thus further facilitating trade through the Pharr POE.

These investments are increasingly important given the current infrastructure backlog worth billions of dollars at our land POEs and the ongoing recession due to the Coronavirus. While Congress should continue working toward fully modernizing POEs, such as the Santa Teresa and Pharr POEs, it must act immediately to extend authorization for the DAP. By extending the program, we would protect ongoing public-private partnerships, create jobs and strengthen the trade economy of border communities.

We appreciate your consideration and urge you to reauthorize this critical program before December 16, 2020.

Sincerely,



Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress


M.C.

Will Hurd
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
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