



May 15, 2020

Mr. Mark A. Morgan
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Acting Commissioner Morgan,

As our Nation's response to COVID-19 continues to evolve, we are starting to see additional impacts of a devastated travel industry, and the direct effect of reduced travel on government revenues. We are writing to raise concern about a recent proposal to increase the rates user fee funded airports pay CBP for customs services at a time when revenues at these airports have been devastated by dramatic decreases in international traffic due to COVID-19.

In mid-May user fee airports that support international operations with CBP inspection facilities received notice of a significant, and in many cases unspecified, fee increase for those services. Airports are reporting increases between 29 and 54 percent, effective almost immediately. Those same airports were expected to quickly respond (in some cases within hours of receiving the notice) by either accepting the rate increase or by deciding to reduce or suspend CBP service at their airport, a service vital to many in their communities.

While we appreciate the financial challenges CBP is facing and the financial management requirements imposed by Congress, airports should be given sufficient time to understand and plan for the cost increase. It is equally important that the users of these services have an opportunity to understand, consider and plan for any substantial increase. The demands being placed on airports now for such a rapid response fails to understand the public process requirements these airports must adhere to for approval of such rate changes. Most public-use airports must receive an airport board or city council vote of approval prior to enacting rate changes. CBP should also take into consideration the significant consequences to airports of losing their ability to serve international traffic, a significant lifeline for many local economies.

We ask that CBP suspend the May 17, 2020 deadline for airport responses on this rate increase to permit additional exchange of data on this proposal, for airports to collect user feedback, and to consider budgetary adjustments. Additionally, we ask CBP to respect the local process for airport oversight and fiscal management

CBP provides a critical service that facilitates travel and trade for the United States and your investment in people and facilities across the country, and beyond, bring tremendous follow-on value to local economies. The services user fee funded airports provide to the local economy are equally valuable. With additional stakeholder engagement, we will be able to collaboratively work toward a better solution to address this budgetary shortfall.

Please let us know if any additional information or engagement would help.

Thank you for your consideration.