

VERONICA ESCOBAR
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

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NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

February 10, 2022

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Carnahan,

As you know, last year President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), marking a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation's infrastructure. Included in this bill is robust funding for land ports of entry (LPOEs) like the one we have in El Paso, which are crucial for our country's economy, trade, and supply chain security.

Our country's LPOEs facilitate the daily passage of thousands of passenger vehicles, pedestrians, and trillions of dollars in trade for the U.S. annually. The El Paso LPOEs plays a significant role in this process, having facilitated \$100 billion in trade annually prior to the pandemic with trade totals anticipated to reach the same levels within the next year. Not only does the El Paso LPOEs also serve as critical national infrastructure, but they also serve a vital national security mission. These facilities provide Customs and Border Protection (CBP) with the resources they need to regulate flow in and out of our country while also preventing contraband like illegal drugs from crossing the border.

Unfortunately, there is a significant backlog of repairs and renovations that need to be performed at the El Paso LPOE for both their physical and technological infrastructure. Many of the LPOEs in El Paso and across our borders were built in the 20th century and are outdated. Such conditions impair CBP's ability to effectively carry out its mission, leading to congestion, wait times, air pollution, and security concerns. These delays also pose an environmental hazard for the neighborhoods surrounding the LPOEs and the greater border region because the idling cars spew harmful particulates into the air. To build LPOEs that will last well into this century while caring for the environment, we must look to innovative technology and infrastructure projects like creating a cross border transportation system that emits low to no emissions such as light rail.

While you consider a plan to allocate funding from the BIL to LPOEs, I urge you to give full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, towards investing funding in El Paso LPOEs while considering the need for updated technology, reducing wait times, and exploring more ways of decreasing the LPOEs' carbon footprint. Additionally, it is vital that after funds are announced for any LPOE in the U.S., that there is robust community engagement to ensure local stakeholders can provide input on modernization plans and regional needs.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we deliver 21st century infrastructure to the border region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and 'E'. Below the signature is a solid horizontal line.

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress