



September 25, 2023

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy:

On behalf of the Border Trade Alliance, an organization of private and public sector members dedicated to promoting secure and efficient cross-border trade and commerce between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, thank you for your diligent work to prevent a lapse in appropriations and a government shutdown, which will exacerbate an already precarious situation at the U.S. southern border.

The BTA is deeply concerned about the current situation at the border, which, as you know, is facing significant challenges, with a surge in migrant arrivals prompting temporary closures at international bridges and ports of entry, straining staff resources and infrastructure, and negatively affecting economic stability and regional cooperation.


A government shutdown and the resulting furloughs, reduced staffing levels, and interruptions to services the cross-border trade community depends on risks severe disruptions to the processing of goods – including perishable fresh fruits and vegetables – and substantial economic losses for businesses on both sides of the border. The economic risk is significant, with the daily trade value flowing across our land borders reaching approximately \$3 billion, and Mexico currently holding the position as the U.S.’ top trading partner overall and its leading import partner.¹

We are also concerned about the effects of a shutdown on Customs and Border Protection, whose Border Patrol agents and Customs and Border Protection officers would be required to work without pay. For an agency already under severe strain, a shutdown would significantly harm agency morale, recruitment, and retention. Averting a lapse in pay for these professionals should be a priority.

We urge you to continue to work to find a bipartisan solution that will fund the government and ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical agencies responsible for border management and trade facilitation. The Border Trade Alliance is committed to working with Congress, the administration, and all stakeholders to find practical and sustainable solutions to the challenges at our nation’s borders, but preventing a government shutdown is a must.

Please do not hesitate to consult the Border Trade Alliance as a resource to provide any assistance or information that may be helpful in finding a resolution to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,


Lance Jungmeyer
Chairman


Britton Mullen
President

¹ <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/topcm.html>