

Joint Trade Industry Statement Regarding a Potential Lapse in Government Funding on October 1, 2023

The undersigned trade groups write this joint statement to advocate for all avenues of international trade to remain open during the potential upcoming government shutdown. Both imports and exports are vital to our economy, safety and security, homeland defense, and international relations. Government and the private sector must work together to keep legitimate trade flowing and illicit goods out of the supply chain during this challenging time.

Specifically, the trade community requests:

- **Private Sector Communication with the CBP “War Room”**—We commend CBP for starting the planning process for a potential shut-down, and fully support the staffing of a “war room” throughout any lapse in government funding. We urge CBP to work with the private-sector trade community to establish a direct line of communication for the private sector to inform the “war room” in real time on issues that must be timely resolved to keep trade moving throughout any shutdown.
- **PGA Presence in the CBP “War Room”**—We request CBP and the Participating Government Agencies (PGAs) have PGA staff fully integrated into the CBP “war room,” especially those agencies with hold authority, including FDA, USDA, FWS, EPA, and CPSC—which must clear goods before they can enter the stream of commerce. CBP should consider adding TSA to the “war room,” since this agency does not participate in ACE but has an important border security responsibility. For all these operations, continuing to provide technical support to ensure ACE is operating normally is critical during any shutdown.
- **CBP HQ, Ports, and Centers Must Coordinate**—CBP should pre-plan coordination with the Centers (formerly CEEs) and the local ports. During prior shutdowns the private-sector trade community experienced breakdowns in communication between CBP HQ, the local ports, and the Centers (formerly CEEs) which caused needless inefficiencies in moving trade.
- **CBP Daily Briefings with the Private Sector**—In past lapses of government funding, CBP did an incredible service to the trade by holding daily briefings. CBP should restart this best practice, so that any issues can be swiftly identified and resolved. PGAs with hold authority should attend these daily briefings, since we need to ensure that all parties are working together in a coordinated manner to keep trade moving.
- **Trade Must Flow Both Ways**—The trade community emphasizes that trade must continue moving in both directions for the duration of any lapse in government funding. Export operations and related processes, including licenses, inspections, impractical to screen cargo, and the like, must be able to flow inbound as well as outbound across our borders during a shutdown.

- **All Tangential Trade Functions Must be Considered Essential**—We strongly urge the government when deciding which employees are exempt to consider tangential trade functions. Examples include the issuance of steel and aluminum licenses via the Department of Commerce, EPA inspection sites, all PGA staff who conduct document reviews or technical staff to resolve automation issues, UFLPA focused-employees who review and release detained shipments, personnel who process paper checks at the ports, personnel who conduct inspections for self-propelled used vehicle exports, USDA certificate personnel for U.S. exports, and the like, and should be deemed essential so that trade can continue to move.

Sincerely,

Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC)

Airforwarders Association

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)

American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI)

Atlanta International Forwarders and Brokers Association (AIFBA)

Boston Custom Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association (BCBFFA)

Business Alliance for Customs Modernization

Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters (I.E. Canada)

Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association (CIFFA)

Canadian Society of Customs Brokers (CSCB)

Chicago Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association (CCBFA)

Coalition for New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT)

Columbia River Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association

Confederación de Asociaciones de Agentes Aduanales de la República Mexicana (CAAAREM)

Custom Brokers & Forwarders Association of Northern California

Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association of Charleston, SC Inc. (CBFFAC)

Custom Brokers & International Freight Forwarders Association of Washington State

Detroit Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association

Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

E-Merchants Trade Council, Inc. (EMTC)

Express Association of America (EAA)

Florida Customs Brokers & Forwarders, Inc (FCBF)

Houston Customhouse Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association (HCBFFA)

International Trade Surety Association (ITSA)

Laredo Licensed US Customs Brokers Association (LLUSCBA)

Los Angeles Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association (LACBFFA)

Mid Valley Customs Brokers Association (MVCBA)

National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ)

National Association of Beverage Importers (NABI)

National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA)

National Retail Federation (NRF)

New York New Jersey Foreign Freight Forwarders and Brokers Association Inc.

North Texas Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association (NTCBFFA)

Northern Border Customs Brokers Association

Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association (The PCC)

Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)

San Diego District Customs Brokers Association (SDCBA)

Travel Goods Association (TGA)

United States Council for International Business (USCIB)

U.S. Fashion Industry Association (USFIA)