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United States Senate

March 5, 2019

Commissioner Kevin McAleenan
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Commissioner McAleenan:

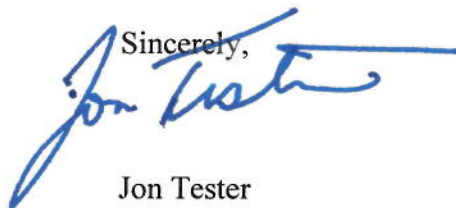
I write to express concerns with the intended announcement of reduced operating hours at the Morgan, Opheim, Raymond, and Scobey ports of entry. It is my understanding that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) plans to proceed with reducing hours for the Port of Raymond beginning April 14, and for Morgan, Opheim, and Scobey in June. This is disappointing, as reducing port hours always disadvantages rural America and harms our agricultural competitiveness. I opposed similar proposals from previous administrations and hope you reconsider this decision.

A significant reduction in port hours during the high season of June through September would also have a negative impact on commerce in my state. This announcement occurs as growing season is set to begin in Montana. This abrupt decision and lack of feedback from farmers and ranchers, shippers, local communities, and our neighbors in Canada represents a deep misunderstanding of the needs of agricultural producers in rural states like Montana.

This decision also harms U.S. competitiveness. By reducing hours at these ports, some farmers and ranchers will be forced to divert their shipments by significant distances. For example, if the Port of Raymond's 24-hour status gets reduced, overnight shippers would have to divert their goods to another 24-hour port nearly 100 miles away in North Dakota or 400 miles away in Montana. This change will be costly for these producers and could make their products less competitive on the marketplace.

I ask that you please reconsider the intended announcement to reduce hours at ports of entry in Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator