



TESTIMONY OF

Troy A. Miller
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

BEFORE

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security

ON

“Fiscal Year 2024 Request for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency”

April 19, 2023
Washington, D.C.

Introduction

Chairman Joyce, Ranking Member Cuellar, and Members of the Subcommittee, I'm honored to appear before you today to discuss the critical mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and how the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 President's Budget — hereafter also referred to as the "Budget" — supports our operational priorities.

It is a privilege to be here today on behalf of the nearly 65,000 dedicated and talented men and women of CBP who protect our Nation from ever-evolving threats by land, sea, and air, while also promoting economic prosperity and the flow of commercial goods. CBP operates around the clock to prevent the entry of inadmissible persons and contraband into the United States at and between our nation's ports of entry (POEs), ensuring the safe and efficient flow of commerce into the United States and enforcing nearly 500 U.S. trade and travel laws and regulations on behalf of 49 Federal agencies. These are complex and difficult responsibilities that CBP personnel take seriously and perform proudly with honor.

Last month, we marked 20 years since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and CBP. The anniversary was a reminder of how the events of September 11, 2001, fundamentally changed our way of life and solidified our mission. The anniversary was also an opportunity to reflect on how the threats facing our borders have evolved and become more diverse and complex. CBP faces many intensely challenging and unique problem sets across our operational environments, and throughout our mission spaces, including irregular migration, the threat of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) engaged in human and drug smuggling, emerging agricultural risks, and the evasion of and noncompliance with trade laws. We continue to address these complex and dynamic challenges with unwavering commitment and resolve.

Despite immense challenges, CBP's dedicated agents, officers, and specialists continue to protect our borders; prevent terrorist and criminal elements, drugs, and dangerous goods from harming our communities; maintain the flow of legitimate travel and commerce; and respond to increased volumes of migrants with dignity and humanity.

I would like to acknowledge and extend my sincere thanks to the Members and staff of this Subcommittee for your consistent support of, and commitment to, CBP's mission, our operations, and our workforce, as well as for the resources you have provided to us in the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act to ensure we continue to do our part to protect this country. Today I will discuss how CBP is making use of those critical resources and detail how the FY 2024 President's Budget supports CBP's enduring mission priorities: countering terrorism, combatting transnational crime, securing the border, streamlining lawful trade, protecting revenue, and facilitating lawful travel.

I could not be prouder of the dedication, innovation, and perseverance of the CBP workforce during the past year. The men and women of CBP have worked tirelessly and made countless advancements in our efforts to secure our borders and identify those who wish to do us harm, facilitate travel and trade, stop the flow of illicit drugs and other contraband, combat forced labor in supply chains, and rescue and assist those in distress. Leaning into technology, we have reduced processing times for trucks from minutes down to seconds, integrated a touchless facial biometric entry process at all U.S. airports, and expanded the use of mobile passport and customs inspections. We have introduced these and other technological improvements to serve as a force

multiplier for our workforce, allowing us to be more efficient and effective in meeting our broad array of complex security and facilitation responsibilities.

FY 2022 and FY 2023 Investments and Accomplishments

The enduring support of this Subcommittee has enabled CBP to build a strong operational foundation. Investments and assistance provided by Congress in FY 2022 and FY 2023 have allowed CBP to adjust to rapidly changing needs in a diverse set of environments, while continuing to make significant progress and advancements in CBP's various missions.

Workforce Care

I am grateful for this Subcommittee's recognition of the physical, mental, and emotional stress that affects CBP employees and their families. Tragically, CBP lost 11 employees to suicide in 2021, and another 15 employees in 2022. These figures are distressing alone but are further compounded by CBP's concurrent record number of line-of-duty deaths. The wellbeing of all CBP employees and their families remains my top priority and I am thankful for the critical funding Congress provided in the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act in support of CBP's ongoing commitment to enhancing our resilience and support programs.

CBP implemented multiple employee initiatives in FY 2022, including the establishment of a Workforce Care Directorate, providing leadership, oversight, resourcing, and operational perspective to support, develop and maintain a resilient workforce. To support the growth and development of CBP's workforce care programs, senior leaders collaborated closely with the Administration and Congress to support funding for our workforce care programs, resulting in a \$23 million investment in the FY 2022 Enacted Appropriations. The FY 2023 Enacted Appropriations recurred that amount and added additional funding for program personnel, providing a total of \$30 million.

With these funds, we've continued to invest in programs that benefit all our employees and enhance training across the Agency. To date, we funded the Childcare Subsidy Program, Backup Care Program, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Core services, and the EAP Onsite Clinician Program that currently provides 32 onsite clinicians in 26 CBP operational locations. We developed and distributed a new suicide prevention train-the-trainer initiative attended by 206 CBP chaplains, peer support members, veteran support members, and professional staff. This new cadre of instructors are required to provide in-person suicide prevention training to all CBP employees by the end of Calendar Year 2023. We funded chaplain and peer support classes, delivered Resilience Skills and Training, deployed Traumatic Incidents and Events Response (TIER) teams in response to critical incidents, improved guidance, education, and information on other support services for CBP employees and their families, and delivered mental and medical health care services to CBP's frontline veteran workforce stationed along the Southwest Border in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration. Additionally, we hired specialized personnel, including field-based operational psychologists, who bring operationally relevant experience and expertise to augment field management to support the mental and physical wellbeing of our employees.

Border Security and Management

Thanks to this Subcommittee's support, the Nation's long-term investment in border security has produced significant and positive results. Because there is no single tool or capability that can detect all suspected threats in all situations and environments, CBP uses a multifaceted approach

that includes highly skilled frontline personnel; advanced detection and inspection technology; domestic and foreign partnerships; and intelligence and information sharing. Using this approach, CBP continues to combat the growing reach and influence of TCOs by disrupting these networks, imposing consequences on those engaged in these criminal activities, and enhancing technology and efforts to interdict illicit drugs and contraband.

At our Ports of Entry

At the POEs, CBP performs a full range of critical inspection, intelligence analysis, examination, and law enforcement activities relating to the arrival and departure of persons, conveyances, and merchandise. With funding provided by Congress in the FY 2022 and FY 2023 Enacted Appropriations, CBP continued to make significant investments and improvements in our POE border security operations, and particularly in our drug detection capabilities and interdiction technology.

CBP has deployed more than 350 large-scale and 4,500 small-scale non-intrusive inspection (NII) X-ray and gamma-ray imaging systems to detect the presence of illicit substances, including synthetic drugs such as fentanyl. This technology enables detection of these illicit substances hidden within passenger belongings, cargo containers, commercial trucks, rail cars, privately owned vehicles, as well as Express Consignment Carrier (ECC) and international mail parcels. In FY 2022, CBP officers used large-scale NII systems to scan more than 7.6 million conveyances, which resulted in the interdiction of more than 100,000 pounds of narcotics and approximately \$2 million of undeclared U.S. currency.

CBP continues to focus on further closing the vehicle scanning capacity gap and increasing the probability of interdiction. With funding provided by Congress, CBP has made progress toward implementing new drive-through NII systems, located in pre-primary inspection versus secondary, that would transmit the image to an officer remotely located in a command center. This work builds upon prior automation and transformation initiatives, leveraging advancements made to scanning and imagery analysis capabilities. At locations where additional pre-primary systems are being deployed, CBP expects an increase in FY 2023 to NII scans of passenger vehicles and fixed occupant commercial vehicles crossing the Southwest Border to as much as 40 percent and 70 percent respectively. Overall, this approach will strengthen CBP's detection and inspection capabilities and increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of our enforcement and facilitation operations.

In FY 2022, CBP seized nearly 656,000 pounds of illicit drugs, including nearly 2,000 pounds of heroin, 175,000 pounds of methamphetamine, and more than 70,000 pounds of cocaine. We also made nearly 1,500 seizures of illicit fentanyl, totaling 15,000 pounds of the dangerous synthetic opioid. We are on track to seize just as much, if not more this year. Additionally, CBP seized 2374 weapons, and \$57.93 million in U.S. currency. Every single seizure is critical. Seizures remove dangerous drugs and weapons from illicit supply chains, deny TCOs valuable profits, and keep them out of our communities. Seizures also give us valuable information through post-seizure analysis to identify networks moving loads and to support partner agencies' investigations and prosecutions.

Along with our Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) partners, CBP leads Operation Blue Lotus, a new coordinated surge operation targeting the smuggling of fentanyl. The Operation includes an increase in targeted inspections by CBP officers and HSI agents, canine units, and

advanced technology at locations along the border. Operation Blue Lotus leverages the advanced analytics and intelligence capabilities and joint enforcement efforts of CBP and HSI to facilitate effective inspections and swift initiation of investigations. Furthermore, CBP's Forward Operating Labs at POEs conduct real-time analysis of suspected substances, providing vital scientific information in support of intelligence gathering and investigations. Since its implementation on March 13, 2023, Operation Blue Lotus has led to 74 arrests and the seizure of approximately 2,500 pounds of fentanyl, 3,600 pounds of methamphetamine, 919 pounds of cocaine, and 42 pounds of heroin.

CBP is responsible for keeping dangerous people from entering the United States while facilitating lawful travel. CBP processes nearly a million travelers at POEs every day. In FY 2022, utilizing both primary and secondary inspections and a multi-layered vetting process, CBP arrested 15,010 individuals wanted for criminal activities and denied entry to 502,473 inadmissible persons, including potential national security and public safety threats.

Between Ports of Entry

Between the POEs, CBP continued to prioritize national security and deploy resources that strengthen our border security operations and protect the American people from acts of terrorism and criminality. In FY 2022 The U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) intercepted 12,028 individuals with prior criminal convictions, prevented 751 gang members from entering the United States, and seized 112,000 pounds of drugs, including 2,200 pounds of fentanyl, 18,300 pounds of methamphetamine, and 12,500 pounds of cocaine.

CBP made substantial investments in autonomous technologies that improve Border Patrol agent efficacy and safety. Examples of these investments include deploying additional Autonomous Surveillance Towers and next generation communications solutions, while continuing to equip the workforce with body worn cameras. CBP also closed 55 gates and gaps in the border barrier to date, and we are working to close an additional 74 gates and gaps along with life, safety, environmental and other remediation activities at incomplete border barrier projects.

In addition, CBP's Innovation Team transitioned counter-unmanned aerial system (C-UAS) technologies to USBP for the detection of illicit cross-border activity of small unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly referred to as "drones," to complement the rest of their border security capabilities. CBP continues to experience high numbers of incidents involving illicit use of drones to facilitate unlawful movement of people and narcotics across the Southwest Border. Nationwide, C-UAS trained operators detected more than 8,300 confirmed, counter-surveillance cross-border incursions by UAS in FY 2022. CBP's C-UAS authorities enable CBP to take responsible action against systems that pose a credible threat to covered facilities or assets along the Southwest border. In FY 2022, trained C-UAS operators used this specialized technology to mitigate 25 drones contributing to the seizure of more than 1,950 pounds of narcotics and the arrest of 3,200 individuals.

CBP also strengthened our engagement with the Government of Mexico (GOM) to dismantle TCOs that profit from smuggling activities involving people, illicit goods, and narcotics. Both CBP and the GOM commit resources and personnel to conduct regular, coordinated patrols, air and marine surveillance, counter-network operations, and joint enforcement actions along our shared borders. Through CBP's Joint Security Program (JSP), CBP officers and agents coordinate with the GOM on admissibility/immigration and criminal non-citizen referrals; drugs,

money, and organized crime; and migrant smuggling, special interest aliens, and terrorism-related targets.

Human smuggling is an inhumane and grievous criminal activity. Launched in 2016 as a joint effort between USBP and the GOM, “Se Busca Información,” which translates to “Information Wanted,” identifies individuals associated with TCOs wanted for crimes associated with human and drug smuggling on both sides of the border. The ‘Se Busca Información’ initiative promotes binational unity and encourages the public to anonymously report information about known smugglers. CBP has also taken the lead on Operation Sentinel, a major U.S. interagency effort supported by the GOM that aims to cut off access to TCO profits from human smuggling by denying these criminals the ability to engage in travel, trade, and finance in the United States.

CBP engages in information and intelligence sharing with GOM related to smuggling routes, weapons/cash/drug caches, TCO operational trends, and operational successes. CBP leads anti-TCO and border security focused capacity building and training under the auspices of CBP’s Office of International Affairs’ Anti-TCO and Border Violence Prevention Inter-Agency Agreement with the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

CBP’s ongoing partnerships leverage the capabilities of our partners to stop cruel and profit-driven human smugglers and save lives at the border and beyond.

As the data clearly shows, CBP has experienced elevated levels of irregular migration since 2019. In FY 2022, along the Southwest Border, USBP encountered 2,206,436 migrants, including 482,962 individuals in a family unit and 149,093 unaccompanied children. Thanks to this Subcommittee’s support, CBP has accelerated ongoing efforts to improve processing operations by deploying additional non-uniformed support personnel; expanding capacity and improving conditions at processing facilities; investing in virtual and mobile processing technologies; and strengthening coordination with partner agencies and organizations.

Thanks to the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act enacted by Congress, as well as robust support Congress has provided over the past several years, CBP has hired more than 1000 Border Patrol Processing Coordinators (BPPCs) with more finalizing training and deployment. We have also expanded the use of contract personnel along the Southwest Border to include nearly 430 contract security personnel for the Centralized Processing Centers (CPCs) and 565 contracted processors to handle data entry and management tasks, with more coming onboard.

To accommodate the intermittent increase of individuals in CBP custody, we renovated and reopened the Rio Grande Valley CPC in McAllen, Texas, in March 2022 and opened two new soft-sided facilities in El Paso and San Diego sectors in January 2023, as well as additional soft sided facilities opened previously in priority locations. These facilities include wrap around service contracts that provide sanitation, food, and medical services necessary to improve CBP’s ability to process migrants efficiently, and to ensure appropriate conditions for migrants and frontline personnel. Deployed in conjunction with other processing capabilities, such as virtual and mobile processing technology, these facilities provide operational flexibility, streamline operations to ensure the safe and humane processing of migrants, and relieve agents of non-enforcement duties.

Getting agents back on the front line is unquestionably important for security, but it is also invaluable to saving lives. Smuggling organizations are abandoning migrants in remote and dangerous areas, leading to a dramatic rise in the number of rescues CBP performs. In FY 2022, CBP conducted nearly 22,500 rescues nationwide, which is 69 percent higher than the total number of rescues in all of 2021. In response, CBP launched a new heat mitigation effort to develop and deploy heat stress kits and go-bags containing helpful items to mitigate potential heat stress injuries and illnesses for agents and migrants alike. The new kits were deployed to 500 agents operating in the Tucson Sector as temperatures rose during the hottest part of the summer. CBP looks forward to expanding this effort to other areas across the Southwest Border.

Trade Enforcement and Facilitation

CBP's commitment to protecting human lives extends into the trade environment. CBP is a global leader in the prevention of forced labor and is one of the few government agencies in the world granted legal authority to take enforcement action against imported goods sourced from entities using forced labor to produce them. Thanks to the support of Congress, in 2022, CBP gained a new tool in its arsenal to combat forced labor with the passage of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). The UFLPA establishes a rebuttable presumption, which became effective June 21, 2022, that any goods mined, produced, or manufactured, either wholly or in part, in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the People's Republic of China or by an entity identified on the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force UFLPA Entity List, are prohibited from importation and not entitled entry to the United States. The UFLPA was passed to address the well documented and systemic use of forced labor by the Chinese Government against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, particularly in the XUAR. In FY 2022, CBP stopped 3,605 shipments valued at \$816.5 million for forced labor concerns, including 1,592 entries valued at nearly \$500 million stopped under the UFLPA.

In addition to enforcing hundreds of trade laws and regulations, CBP also facilitates compliant trade, collects revenue, and protects the U.S. economy, industries, and consumers from harmful imports and unfair trade practices. For example, in FY 2022, we conducted more than 20,812 seizures of goods – valued at more than \$2.9 billion – that violated intellectual property rights. CBP agriculture specialists, with their extensive training and expertise in biological sciences and agriculture inspection, conducted about 930,000 inspections of prohibited plant materials, meat, and/or animal byproducts at U.S. POEs, intercepting more than 91,000 instances of agricultural pests. CBP also launched its Green Trade Strategy in 2022. The strategy is a framework to incentivize green trade, strengthen CBP's environmental enforcement posture, accelerate green innovation, and improve climate resilience and resource efficiency.

The scope and importance of CBP's role in protecting the economic security of the United States cannot be overstated. Collecting \$111.9 billion in duties, taxes, and fees in FY 2022, CBP remains the second largest collector of revenue in the Federal Government. Additionally, CBP processed more than 33.4 million cargo containers, which equates to more than 39.1 million international trade transactions worth \$2.4 trillion in imports and another \$1.4 trillion in U.S. exports.

Keeping legitimate trade moving is critical to the U.S. economy. With the support of this Subcommittee, CBP continues to invest in innovative tools and partnerships to enhance our trade enforcement capabilities, while simultaneously facilitating the movement of legitimate cargo, a responsibility that is critical to our nation's economic prosperity. For example, in FY 2022, CBP

fully implemented the Truck Manifest Modernization capability in the Automated Commercial Environment. This new capability allows for seamless integration between CBP systems for NII, passenger processing, targeting, examination findings, and commercial processing. Today, more than 99 percent of the 45,000-50,000 trucks CBP encounters daily clear primary processing in less than 30 seconds.

Collaboration with federal and international partners is an inherent part of CBP's trade operations. In FY 2022, CBP partnered with 13 federal agencies to implement a Global Business Identifier pilot program to test the concept of a single business identifier solution to improve the U.S. government's ability to efficiently identify high-risk shipments and facilitate legitimate trade. CBP also entered into several bilateral understandings with foreign customs administrations, including those of Uruguay, Guatemala, and Brazil. These agreements establish platforms for the exchange of information and recognition of respective administration's supply chain security programs and confirm the parties' joint commitment to combating customs and trade offenses.

Traveler Processing and Travel Security

In FY 2022, CBP officers processed nearly 317 million travelers at air, land, and sea POEs, including nearly 96 million travelers at airports. While international traveler arrivals are still less than FY 2019, the numbers are continuing to rebound as the travel industry recovers from the effects of the pandemic. With the support of Congress, CBP has taken action to do our part to welcome travelers and improve the post-pandemic traveler experience.

To facilitate enrollment in CBP Trusted Traveler Programs, CBP reopened enrollment centers in the United States and continued to respond to the high demand for Global Entry membership through opportunities such as Enrollment on Arrival. CBP's Trusted Traveler Programs topped 10 million members in March 2022 and received 3.7 million applications in FY 2022, the most CBP has ever received in a single year. Growth in these programs with the deployment of technological and biometric innovations facilitate the processing of known, low-risk, vetted travelers arriving to the United States, permitting CBP officers additional time to focus on travelers who pose unknown or higher risk.

As part of our travel process enhancement efforts, CBP expanded its Mobile Passport Control program to include the Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver Preclearance locations and its Simplified Arrival process, which uses biometric facial comparison technology, to automate the manual document checks that are already required for admission into the United States. This process provides travelers with a safe, secure, and more streamlined travel experience while fulfilling a longstanding Congressional mandate to biometrically record the entry and exit of non-U.S. citizens. Furthermore, in FY 2022, the National Vetting Center (NVC) successfully deployed vetting support to several key U.S. Government travel and immigration programs. By utilizing the NVC's unique technology and processes, several supported programs saw a decrease in processing times while increasing national security. The NVC's importance will continue to increase as demand travel or immigration benefits continue to grow.

While conditions are improving, the residual effects of the pandemic continue to impact international air travel, causing a decline in user fee collections for CBP's largest accounts (customs and immigration inspection fees). We are thankful for this Subcommittee's provision of emergency funds in the FY 2023 appropriations to mitigate the declines. To continue to meet

mission needs during this time of fiscal constraint, CBP has leveraged user fee carryover, additional Congressionally enacted funds, and has reduced costs to the greatest extent possible while still meeting our vital mission.

FY 2024 President's Budget and Strategic Funding Priorities

Building on these accomplishments and efforts, the President's FY 2024 President's Budget includes more than \$16.5 billion in net discretionary funding for CBP, including more than \$1 billion for investments in effective and modern port and border security, including the modernization of facilities; enhancements in border security technology and assets; improvements in mission capabilities; care and support of our workforce; and efforts to ensure the safe and humane treatment of migrants in CBP custody.

CBP is focused on establishing a long-term operational strategy and structure that prioritizes the support and resilience of our dedicated and vital workforce. Building on investments to workforce care programs in FY 2022 and FY 2023, the Budget requests \$34 million to sustain and expand existing programs, while simultaneously supporting the efforts necessary to institutionalize workforce care at CBP. These efforts include expanding EAP Core Services, the EAP Onsite Clinician Program, Childcare Subsidy Program, and Backup Care Program; enhancing training and development for suicide prevention, chaplain, peer support, TIER, and resilience skills; and improving educational opportunities and other support services for CBP employees and their families. CBP's dedicated workforce is the reason for every agency accomplishment, and, with this Subcommittee's support, we intend to integrate workforce care considerations into every aspect of our planning and operations, as well as in the development of our investments and resource priorities.

Serving as workforce multipliers, strong investments in border security technology are especially critical to CBP's efforts to maintain domain awareness and take swift action to respond to dangerous threats, such as the threat of fentanyl. While most of our fentanyl seizures still occur at POEs, as CBP becomes more efficient and effective at detecting and intercepting illicit drugs, TCOs and other bad actors may alter their concealment tactics. CBP is constantly adapting to these changes, and thanks to strong investments in border security technology and domain awareness, CBP is well equipped to counter evolving threats.

Strengthening Border Security Capabilities and Management

CBP's resource priorities in the FY 2024 President's Budget to enhance border security operations include increasing staffing and technology; strengthening domain awareness; and increasing CBP's ability to detect and prohibit illegal goods and drugs, particularly fentanyl, from entering the country. These investments will enhance and expand CBP's operational capabilities by increasing our ability to quickly detect and interdict illegal activity along U.S. borders, at POEs, and in the air and maritime domains.

Modernizing Port of Entry Technology

CBP, with the support of Congress, continues to prioritize investments to disrupt TCO drug smuggling activities by enhancing and expanding our drug detection capabilities and technology used at POEs. Our highly trained officers use a variety of technologies to detect the presence of illicit drugs, including illicit opioids, in all operating environments.

CBP's NII systems continue to demonstrate their value as part of CBP's layered enforcement strategy to screen for illicit goods and substances, including illicit drugs, entering through land POEs. To enhance enforcement, while facilitating secure and compliant trade, CBP must continue to close its scanning capability gaps. The FY 2024 President's Budget includes \$305.4 million to identify, procure, and deploy enhanced inspection capabilities to interdict emerging threats in the land and mail environments. Funding for NII will provide the resources needed to execute required civil work activities to deploy the drive-through NII systems at remaining Southwest Border land POEs. The Budget also funds the procurement and deployment of 10 systems to enhance narcotic detection at nine locations in the Southwest Border region.

CBP recognizes increased scanning will result in a substantial increase of images that require analysis and adjudication. To address this area, the FY 2024 President's Budget supports CBP's ongoing work with industry partners to develop artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities to reduce the need for a trained CBP officer to analyze each image. Without such capabilities, the expansion of pre-primary NII operations beyond current rates would require a significant increase in staffing to review images without adverse impacts to the free movement of legitimate commercial vehicles. The Budget supports continued development of narcotic detection algorithms to increase the efficiency and effectiveness when adjudicating anomalies, while establishing a library to adapt to emerging threat and enhance interdiction of precursor chemical substances, with primary focus on fentanyl detection.

Enhancing Border Security Technology, Efficiencies, and Assets

For CBP, the use of technology in the border environment is an invaluable force multiplier that provides our frontline personnel increased situational awareness and improves our ability to meet the daily challenges of a dynamic border threat environment.

With the support of Congress, CBP deploys the necessary technology, infrastructure, and personnel needed to maintain situational awareness and address current and emerging operational challenges.

The FY 2024 President's Budget supports CBP's plan to expand and enhance domain awareness capabilities through continued investments in USBP's Common Operating Picture (COP). The USBP COP ensures all accessible sensor data are transmitted, monitored, and recorded at a Command-and-Control Center at a USBP station providing a more efficient method to view the activity at the nation's borders. COP improves USBP information management, situational awareness, and decision-making capabilities. Furthermore, CBP has been working for the past few years to expand and integrate COP into fragmented Command-and-Control Centers that will integrate surveillance feeds into a smaller number of centers and utilize artificial intelligence, requiring fewer personnel to monitor feeds. The FY 2024 President's Budget includes \$66.4 million for testing, training, and transitioning to Initial Operational Capability (IOC) status for COP installation at the Douglas, Arizona, USBP facility and three additional USBP locations.

Supporting an ongoing modernization effort will provide a more consistent and efficient enforcement workflow for USBP field agents and leadership, a critical need given 21st century border threats. The FY 2024 President's Budget supports \$27.2 million for the continued modernization of the Border Enforcement Coordination Network (BECN), the follow-on system to the legacy Border Patrol Enforcement Systems (BPES). BECN consists of systems, services, and equipment that help USBP detect, deter, identify, classify, and resolve illegal border activity

and to manage its resources effectively. BECN contributes to situational awareness and enhances operational decision-making by enabling real-time information sharing, data analysis, and visualization. Funding will support the IT systems, equipment, and services needed to sustain system development, including hardware and software, shared services and cloud hosting costs, business intelligence and architecture support, and program management.

Aerial surveillance capabilities are a vital component of CBP's domain awareness, especially in the land environment along the Southwest Border. To ensure we continue to meet operational needs for aerial surveillance, the Budget includes \$13 million for the replacement of eight obsolete, out-of-production, and expensive to support aircraft sensor integrated mission systems and \$30 million to fund the acquisition and missionization of one Land Interdiction Multi-Role Enforcement Aircraft (MEA). The MEA is the optimal manned aircraft, equipped with advanced sensors for surveillance operations in regions such as the Northern and Southern Borders as well as maritime environments where water, terrain, weather, and distance pose significant obstacles to border security operations between POEs and in the littorals. In addition to detection and surveillance, the MEA serves as a force multiplier for law enforcement and emergency response personnel because the MEA provides rapid-response deployment of equipment, canines, and personnel. Funding the Land Interdiction variation of the MEA will greatly increase the security posture of the United States against drug and human trafficking and unauthorized entries along the Northern and Southern land borders.

While advanced technology multiplies workforce capabilities, it cannot replace it. To support CBP's ongoing and rigorous human resource efforts, the FY 2024 President's Budget supports the hiring of 350 new Border Patrol Agents, 150 new CBP Officers, 310 Border Patrol Processing Coordinators; and additional Mission Support Staff for Border Patrol and the Office of Field Operations to supplement those staffing additions. These additional field positions will bolster situational awareness, respond to increased levels of migration along the Southwest Border, improve agent safety, and ensure the efficient processing, safety, and care of migrants while in our custody.

Reinforcing Mission Capability and Mission Support

The President's FY 2024 President's Budget recognizes the importance of ensuring CBP personnel work in secure, safe, and functional facilities and operate modern mission-critical vehicles that facilitate their complex and critical daily activities. The Budget includes funding for design, construction, and renovation projects to ensure operational effectiveness is not hampered by a lack of adequate facilities.

For example, the FY 2024 President's Budget provides funding for a new USBP Station in Houlton, Maine, that will reduce the distance from the facility to the patrol area, accommodate existing staff plus allow enforcement flexibility for up to 50 agents, reduce overcrowding, and provide adequate equipment storage facilities, vehicle parking spaces and a safe working environment for station personnel, detainees, and visitors. The Budget also addresses administrative and storage space deficiencies at the current location of the Air and Marine Operations (AMO) Tucson Air Branch caused by a substantial increase in aircraft and personnel since the site was originally designed. Tucson Air Branch has the highest number of flight hours in the Southwest Border region and the largest volume of narcotics and currency seizures. The FY 2024 President's Budget also includes funding for facility construction and improvement

costs associated with the additional Office of Professional Responsibility agents that were funded in the FY 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

Ensuring the security of our Nation's borders is USBP's highest priority and the effectiveness at which this is accomplished, is attributed in large part to USBP having the requisite number of reliable vehicles in its fleet available for agents to deploy when needed. USBP has a significant number of vehicles in its fleet operating beyond their lifecycle and eligible for replacement. The FY 2024 President's Budget also funds the replacement of approximately 470 additional mission-critical vehicles for USBP.

Conclusion

In the conduct of all our operations, CBP remains committed to maintaining the highest level of transparency and trust by Congress and the American people.

As prudent stewards of taxpayer money, we intend to ensure that taxpayer-funded investments are made in a smart and cost-effective way, while still meeting border security requirements and complying with appropriations statutes. We will continue to maximize the investments already made as part of our comprehensive strategy to secure and protect our borders.

Day after day the men and women of CBP persistently safeguard the economic interests and public health of the American people by ensuring travelers and goods move safely and efficiently across U.S. borders, that migrants and visitors are properly processed, and that trade laws, regulations, and related international agreements are enforced.

We are absolutely committed to balancing the need to maintain border security, properly care for those in our custody, and keep the American people and our workforce safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.