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ON THE HILL: Recent Hearings Highlight CBP's FY 2015 Budget Request, Authorization, Southwest Border Technology, and Passport Security



CBP's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request — On April 2, 2014, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske testified before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, for a hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request for CBP.

In his [written statement](#), Commissioner Kerlikowske discussed how CBP is using the resources provided by Congress efficiently and effectively, and demonstrated how the President's FY 2015 Budget Request supports CBP's continued commitment to national and economic security. Building on CBP's efforts to strengthen front line capabilities and optimize resources, CBP's budget request includes a legislative change to user fee collections that will support the hiring of up to an additional 2,000 CBP officers and further enable CBP to secure and facilitate the increasing volume of trade and travel.

CBP Authorization — Acting U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Deputy Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Deputy Director Daniel Ragsdale testified before the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, on April 8, 2014, for a hearing focused on recently-introduced legislation to authorize CBP (H.R. 3846) and ICE (H.R. 4279) in statute. The hearing highlighted the more than 100 congressional committees and subcommittees with jurisdictional oversight over the Department of Homeland Security.



In a [joint written statement](#), the witnesses commended the Subcommittee's endeavor to authorize CBP and ICE in statute, a pursuit that, "reflects the very spirit and impetus of the Homeland Security Act: to integrate, streamline, and modernize our Nation's security functions into a unified force, a strengthened homeland security enterprise, and a more secure America that is better equipped to confront the range of threats we face today and in the days to come."



Passport Security — Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of International Affairs Assistant Secretary Alan Bersin and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Acting Assistant Commissioner John Wagner testified on April 4, 2014, at a House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing on, "Passport Fraud: An International Vulnerability." In a [joint written statement](#), the witnesses noted that the United States screens all passports against the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database prior to admission.

Expanding on DHS passport security efforts, CBP developed the Carrier Liaison Program (CLP), a training program for airline personnel. The CLP, explained the witnesses, "enables participants, including airline check-in personnel, boarding agents, and security company staff, to receive hands-on instruction in fraudulent document identification, passenger assessment, impostor identification, and traveler document verification."

Arizona Technology Plan — On March 12, 2014, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Technology Innovation and Acquisition Assistant Commissioner Mark Borkowski testified before the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, for a hearing titled, "The Arizona Border Surveillance Technology Plan and its Impact on Border Security."



In his [written statement](#), Mr. Borkowski discussed how CBP has moved away from an all-encompassing SBInet concept and instead is approaching border technology requirements in more manageable pieces tailored to specific regions on the border. This approach, referred to as the Arizona Technology Plan, leverages non-developmental items and uses firm fixed price contracting, which reduces the risk to the Government of substantial and uncontrolled cost growth.

The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

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Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for Frequently Asked Questions, News and Events, and other CBP Resources.

CBP Expands Public Private Partnerships, Plans Locations for 2,000 New Officers



On March 31, 2014, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced a new Reimbursable Services and Donations Acceptance authority and the allocation of 2,000 additional CBP officers to further enhance security and improve service levels at ports of entry across the country, while facilitating trade and travel essential to the growing U.S. economy. These efforts are key components of the agency's [Resource Optimization Strategy](#), which maximizes resources and increases efficiencies in order to improve travelers' experiences as they arrive at the nation's ports of entry.

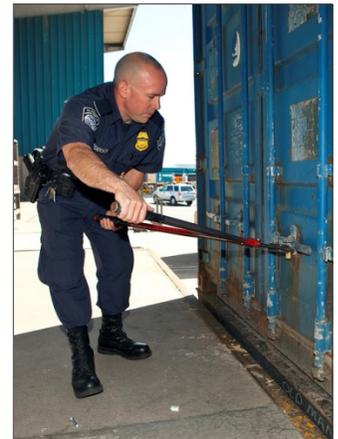
"Research has shown that for every 33 additional CBP officers the U.S. can potentially gain over 1,000 jobs. These measures are a significant down payment and a wise investment in our airports, seaports and land border crossings that will pay dividends for the nation's economy," said Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske. "We look forward to continuing to work with Congress and our stakeholders to implement additional investments that will allow us to support growing volumes of trade and travel that are vital to our economic prosperity."

The Reimbursable Services program permits CBP to enter into partnerships with private sector and government entities and to accept certain donations that will help enable CBP to support additional requests for services for a five-year period. Last year, CBP signed five agreements with ports in Houston, Dallas, El Paso, South Texas and Miami. [Applications for partnerships](#) will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. EDT April 30, 2014.

As a result of the funding provided in the Fiscal Year 2014 Omnibus, CBP also announced the allocation of 2,000 new CBP officers at air, land and sea ports across the country. Among the cities that will see an increase in personnel at their local ports are New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Buffalo, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, Las Vegas, Laredo, Nogales and New Orleans. Overall, 44 ports in 18 states will receive additional staffing that will reduce wait times, and help speed the lawful flow of goods and people into the nation. CBP allocated the additional officers using its [Workload Staffing Model](#), an analytical tool that objectively identifies staffing needs across the country. CBP will work aggressively to recruit, hire and train the highest caliber applicants to meet our hiring mandate by the end of FY2015.

CBP is committed to ensuring the security our nation's borders while facilitating the growing rate of legitimate travel and trade. The Department of Commerce estimates the rate of travel into the United States will increase by 3.4 to 4.3 percent annually in the coming years. That growth will represent an additional 17 million visitors when compared to 2012 numbers. In response to the growing flow, CBP has implemented a number of initiatives to increase workforce capability and maximize resources: increasing enrollment in trusted traveler programs; establishing self-service Automated Passport Control kiosks and mobile technology to streamline processes; increasing risk segmentation through enhanced targeting; and continuing to implement business transformation initiatives, such as the automation of the I-94 form.

For additional information, please contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



CBP Enforcement News



Border Patrol Agents Arrest Individual After Tracking Footprints from the Canadian Border

Wellesley Island, NY — On March 16, 2014, agents from the Wellesley Island Border Patrol Station arrested a Canadian citizen after the man illegally entered the United States by walking across the frozen Lake of the Isles portion of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Early that morning, Border Patrol agents discovered fresh footprints originating in Canada and leading away from the U.S.-Canada International Boundary. Agents tracked the footprints to a property near the border where, in an attempt to conceal his foot sign, the suspect had crawled under trees, up a flight of stairs and across a deck to the front door. The suspect attempted to brush out his footprints near the entryway before breaking into the home.

— Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.



Dulles CBP Intercepts First in Port Slug

Sterling, VA — On March 21, 2014, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) entomologist confirmed that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agriculture specialists at Washington Dulles International Airport discovered a new pest in the Washington area when they intercepted, *Pallifera* sp (Philomycidae), a type of slug, while inspecting an air cargo shipment of fresh mint from Mexico. Slugs can be a host for human pathogens such as *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, a parasitic nematode that is a worldwide problem and the most common parasite causing human eosinophilic meningitis. Slugs also eat a wide variety of leafy plants causing damage and disease and potentially lowering crop yield.

— Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.



Air and Marine, Border Patrol Seize Nearly \$1.4 Million in Marijuana and Apprehend Two Suspects

Sonoita, AZ — On March 19, 2014, Tucson Sector Border Patrol agents seized nearly \$1.4 million worth of marijuana and arrested two Mexican nationals for narcotics smuggling. Around noon, an Office of Air and Marine (OAM) aircraft detected a suspicious vehicle traveling in a known smuggling area near the border. OAM notified Border Patrol agents and maintained a visual of the truck and two subjects. Upon arriving on the scene, agents discovered an abandoned pickup truck containing 119 wrapped bundles of marijuana weighing more than 2,700 pounds. After an extensive search of the area, a Border Patrol canine team discovered one subject hiding south of the abandoned vehicle and the OAM aircraft assisted agents in locating the second subject.

— Visit the [CBP Newsroom](#) for the full story.

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