

RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN, CHAIRMAN

JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
MICHAEL B. ENZI, WYOMING
KELLY AYOTTE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
JONI ERNST, IOWA
BEN SASSE, NEBRASKA

THOMAS R. CARPER, DELAWARE
CLAIRE McCASKILL, MISSOURI
JON TESTER, MONTANA
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN
HEIDI HEITKAMP, NORTH DAKOTA
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY
GARY C. PETERS, MICHIGAN

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR
GABRIELLE A. BATKIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

May 16, 2016

The Honorable R. Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Kerlikowske:

I write today to request your assistance to help resolve a matter that significantly affects the Milwaukee area and the state of Wisconsin.

The General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee is seeking to enter into an agreement with Volaris for a low-fare nonstop flight between Milwaukee and Guadalajara, Mexico. This would be the first new international flight offered by the Mitchell Airport in decades. Additionally, this would be the only direct service flight between Wisconsin and Mexico, providing a significant benefit to the people of Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, the only obstacle is the availability of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel for the proposed evening arrival time of the twice-weekly flights from Guadalajara. It is my understanding that the Mitchell Airport, Volaris, and Milwaukee County officials tried to negotiate times that could accommodate CBP personnel, but CBP has not provided enough information to help these interested parties identify alternate arrival times. Without CBP staffing, the service agreement with Volaris cannot go forward, and Mitchell Airport may have to wait more years to expand its international flight offerings.

I understand that CBP staffing shortages are not unique to Mitchell Airport. However, I am concerned that CBP is unable to accommodate the necessary personnel for just two evening shifts per week. I believe this is an issue that can easily be overcome by a willingness to reach a solution.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you direct the appropriate CBP officials to explore available options that would accommodate CBP staffing for this international flight that is important to the city of Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin.

The Honorable Kerlikowske
May 16, 2016
Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Johnson" clearly legible.

Ron Johnson
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Thomas Carper
Ranking Member