

June 5, 2002

The Honorable Philip Crane, Chairman
Subcommittee on Trade
House Ways and Means Committee
1104 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Crane:

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring that H.R. 1236, legislation to permanently designate the San Antonio International Airport as an international port of entry, be included in a list of introduced bills for public comment for the miscellaneous trade bill the Committee is currently drafting. I understand the various concerns you mentioned in your letter will most likely be expressed once again, however, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the concerns.

Your letter stated that "Customs will also examine whether San Antonio's inland location makes it difficult for Customs to track planes crossing the border especially given the high concentration of smuggling activity that takes place on the Southern border." However, it is important to note that Midland International Airport, located in Midland, Texas is also a Customs port of entry. Midland, Texas is located over 200 miles from the U.S. Mexico border, while San Antonio, Texas is located approximately 150 miles from the border. Yet, Midland has been designated as a Customs port of entry, even though its location is further inland than San Antonio.

The issue of airport security is one that must be addressed, certainly after the events of September 11th. I wholeheartedly understand the concern for airport security and want to work along with the appropriate agencies to ensure that our traveling public is safe. However, during the time the airport has been operating as a port of entry, which is more than a year now, San Antonio has seen no hint of problems or security breaches. In addition, I have yet to receive the required one-year report from Customs that is required by law. Ultimately, this leads one to believe that this is probably due to the lack of any negative information to include in the report.

Once again, thank you for all your assistance with this matter. As I have stated before, the port of entry designation is extremely important for the economic health of San Antonio. I am enclosing a binder which includes letters of support to be submitted as a part of the public comments for the miscellaneous trade and tariff bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or further comments.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress

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