

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

To President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you with grave concerns regarding the decision to suspend major rail crossings between Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas restricting the free flow of legally transported goods to and from Mexico. This shortsighted decision punishes Americans and American small businesses—particularly farmers in Iowa—for your administration’s failure to secure the border.

Since the beginning of the Biden Administration, more than 6.4 million illegal immigrants have poured over the southern border and into our country.¹ Appallingly, this is more than double the population of our home state of Iowa. Each day, thousands of illegal immigrants cross our border with no respect for the rule of law. Your administration’s failure to prevent the flood of illegal immigrants has not only created a national security crisis but a humanitarian catastrophe as well. The cartels are having a field day, profiting by trafficking people and drugs into our country, while turning every state into a border state.

Iowans are already paying the price for your disastrous policies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 475 Iowans died in 2021—the most recent year for which there is data—as a result of a drug overdose.² These numbers will only increase as more and more illicitly trafficked drugs flow across our open border.

If that is not bad enough, American taxpayers are being forced to fund this tragedy. Your administration has green-lit taxpayer-funded assistance, transportation, and other services, on American taxpayers’ dime while many struggle to make ends meet thanks to poor economic decisions made by your administration.

¹ *Southwest Land Border Encounters*. U.S. Customs and Border Protection. (n.d.).
<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, March 1). *Drug overdose mortality by State*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/drug_poisoning_mortality/drug_poisoning.htm

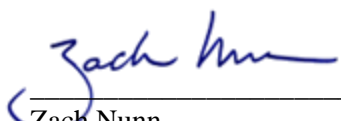
Now, to add insult to injury, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's decision to shut down rail crossings between Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas is again forcing Iowans to bear the cost of your border crisis.

More than one third of the nation's business with Mexico is exchanged between Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas. Further, 45 percent of Union Pacific's U.S.-Mexico business is conducted through these railways. For every day the railways are closed, 60 trains sit idle and 4,500 Union Pacific rail cars face delay, contributing to the embargo of grain and other goods.³


Iowa proudly leads the country in agriculture, with our farmers working day in, day out to feed and fuel the world. The importance of rail for transporting Iowa's grain and agricultural products across the country cannot be overstated. Furthermore, one of every three planted acres in the U.S. is exported. Our agricultural exports support roughly one million U.S. jobs and 31 percent of our American farm income.⁴

Let us be clear: this punitive move to harm America's farmers will exacerbate the pain already felt by families across the country because of the border crisis you caused. We, therefore, urge you to establish operational control of these passes to reopen the flow of legal goods as quickly as possible. We appreciate your prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,



Zach Nunn
Member of Congress



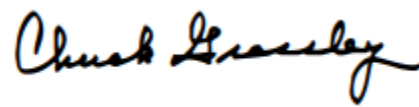
Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



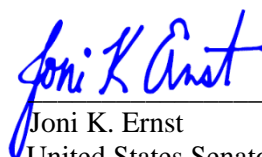
Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress



Mariannette MILLER-MEEKS, M.D.
Member of Congress



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture

³ Union Pacific. (n.d.). <https://www.up.com/index.htm>

⁴ Corn exports. Iowa Corn Growers Association. (n.d.). <https://www.iowacorn.org/corn-uses/exports>