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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
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COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
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ILLICIT FINANCE, AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the State Route 11/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry Project Intelligent Transportation Systems for Lane Management and Traveler Information project in fiscal year 2027, in the amount of \$10,000,000. The entity to receive the funding is the San Diego Association of Governments, located at 1011 Union Street, Suite 400, San Diego, CA 92101.

The State Route 11 (SR 11)/Otay Mesa East Port of Entry (OME POE) project is a joint effort between Caltrans and SANDAG, in collaboration with state and federal partners in the U.S. and Mexico, to create an innovative new land port of entry that will improve regional mobility, enhance border security and safety, fuel economic growth, and bolster binational trade. The OME POE will be the first U.S. land POE to use dynamic tolling to manage demand via tolled approach roads and an intelligent transportation system (ITS) to alleviate supply chain bottlenecks and deliver reliability, particularly critical for time-sensitive trips and cargo. SANDAG is requesting \$10 million to support construction of lane management and other ITS elements that are critical to effectively manage traffic demand and deliver a 20-30-minute average wait time goal. The ITS components being installed include Advance Traveler Information Systems (Dynamic Signs that display wait times at the various ports, and toll rates information at OME along multiple regional routes to inform travelers); Traffic and Lane management equipment (e.g., Lane Control Signs, LIDAR and Video-AI based traffic flow and queue detection); and Communication upgrades (e.g., Fiber Optic Cable, Hub equipment).

This project is a good use of federal funds because the updates will help separate large commercial vehicles from smaller passenger vehicles, streamline processing by channelizing traffic to designated lanes, and direct travel throughout the site. Additionally, a central Regional Border Management System will transmit coordinated messages about traffic status, incidents and other warnings to be displayed on signs along approach roads to the port on both sides of the border, helping travelers to make informed decisions about crossing. The ITS and lane management components will connect to a broader Regional Border Management System, helping to achieve an average 20-30-minute wait time goal at the OME. On day one, the new POE is expected to reduce wait times at all regional land ports of entry by 50%. The reduced border wait times will help lower vehicle idling, improving local air quality for border adjacent communities.

The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 23 U.S.C. § 133.

This project has broad support from a large network of partners and stakeholders, including the Port of San Diego, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, State Senator Stephen Padilla, San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, City Councilmember Vivian Moreno, State Assemblymember David Alvarez, the California Department of Transportation, and the Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Thank you for your consideration of funding for these programs. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Senior Legislative Assistant, Michael Rivas, at michael.rivas@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juan Vargas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress