

September 24, 2025

Lee Zeldin  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

The National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA) is concerned about the impact of a potential government shutdown on import/export trade processing – an important function of your agency and an important feature of the Trump Administration’s America First Trade Policy. NCBFAA represents customs brokers and freight forwarders, who are on the frontlines of import and export trade.

We all know safe and efficient trade supply chains are necessary to both the economic and physical security of this nation. Your agency plays a critical role to prevent unsafe products from entering the country and to keep legitimate trade flowing. The two go hand in hand: facilitating the movement of compliant product allows agencies to focus enforcement more sharply on noncompliant shipments.

That is why we need your agency to designate enough “excepted” employees to ensure that safe and effective import and export trade processing continues in the event of a prolonged government shutdown. More specifically:

- **Frontline and Support Staff:** Frontline staff at the ports are critical. But just as important are staff in the Regional Offices and Headquarters to conduct document reviews, process pesticide Notices of Arrival or respond to inquiries when automated “May Proceeds” are delayed. In prior shutdowns, lengthy delays of EPA-regulated products occurred when the Regions were left unstaffed. This created congestion at the ports, costly demurrage for the trade and inefficiencies in sorting through compliant versus noncompliant shipments. We urge you to provide sufficient staff to support these critical import and export processing functions.
- **Agency Contact Points:** Provide points of contact for importers, exporters and customs brokers within each of your divisions during a government shutdown.
- **CBP War Room Presence:** We understand that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will stand up a “war room” if a government shutdown occurs. We urge your agency to be present in the war room. This is important for a coordinated and effective government effort to meet the trade processing challenges of a shutdown.
- **CBP Trade Calls:** CBP will conduct regular calls with the trade to report on developments as they occur and to learn of trouble spots from the trade. Your agency’s participation in these calls is essential, as well as your willingness to troubleshoot problems.

- **Outreach to Trade:** Rapid communication with the trade during a shutdown is essential. NCBFAA can reach thousands of customs brokers/forwarders within minutes to provide guidance or other useful information that will in turn be spread to hundreds of thousands of importers/exporters. Please utilize NCBFAA as a resource to spread the word.

We hope that a government shutdown can be averted. In the meantime, NCBFAA stands ready to work with your agency if a government shutdown does occur. Please let us know how we can best help you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jose D. Gonzalez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jose D. Gonzalez  
President