

September 24, 2025

Brian Nesvik  
Director  
Fish & Wildlife Service  
1849 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Nesvik,

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 in preventing noncompliant 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 encourage 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:** We know that the Fish & Wildlife Service’s (FWS) wildlife inspection program is user-fee funded and will continue to operate during a shutdown. Frontline staff at the ports are indeed critical. But just as important are staff in regional offices and headquarters to conduct document reviews, issue licenses and permits, and backstop automated systems. During recent shutdowns, FWS was forced to perform manual clearances when e-Decs was temporarily halted. 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 “excepted” staff to support these critical import and export processing functions.
- **Agency Contacts:** Provide points of contact for importers, exporters and customs brokers within each of your divisions during a government shutdown.
- **Website:** The FWS website is a necessary lifeline to the trade community. Not only does it provide valuable resources and information, the website allows the trade to apply for permits and conduct other business. In today’s automated world, it is essential that staff is available to keep the website up and running.

- **CBP War Room Presence:** In prior shutdowns, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) stood up a “war room” when a government shutdown occurred and we expect CBP to do so again in the event of a shutdown. 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 learn of trouble spots from the trade. Your agency’s participation in these calls is important, 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 of specific import or export procedures to follow during a shutdown.

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