



**U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection**

JUL 16 2015

Mr. James T. Brett  
President and CEO  
The New England Council  
98 North Washington Street, Suite 201  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Brett:

Thank you for your July 7, 2015 letter to Secretary Johnson regarding wait times at Boston Logan International Airport.

The primary mission of U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) is to prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States while facilitating the flow of legitimate trade and travel. To accomplish this mission, CBP continues to implement a comprehensive, multi-layered strategy that integrates a professional workforce, technology, innovation, business transformation, and partnerships with industry, government agencies, and other stakeholders. CBP recognizes that passenger primary operations affect traveler perceptions of the Nation and the Federal Government, and that passenger wait times can affect trade and tourism.

CBP has observed an increase in wait times at Boston Logan International Airport. Over the last fiscal quarter, the average wait times was 24.3 minutes. This is above the national average and at a level comparable to some of the highest volume airports with above-average wait times. Still, this average is lower than the average from the same quarter last year and most arriving passengers do not experience excessive waits. During the last quarter, 99.7 percent of arriving passengers waited less than one hour. The airport has 34 booths available for CBP officer staffing. The port does not currently have enough personnel to consistently staff these booths to capacity, but at most airports it is cost prohibitive to have enough personnel to be able to staff all available booths during all peak arrival times.

The volume of international travel to the United States continues to increase. To keep pace with this growth, CBP continues to develop and implement new processes and technologies that improve services. These new initiatives have improved service levels at many locations, and CBP will continue to enhance service levels, transparency of communication, and collaboration through public-private partnerships. For example, CBP collaborated with Boston Logan International Airport to install Automated Passport Control (APC) kiosks. APCs enable passengers to submit their declaration and biographic information electronically while waiting in line, an innovation that has reduced average wait times by as much as 30 percent. This success illustrates the importance of collaboration and innovation to meet growing demands.

In addition, CBP recognizes the need to expand staffing to keep pace with growing workloads while maintaining our commitment to efficient and effective service. CBP received additional

Mr. James T. Brett

Page 2

funding to hire and train 2,000 officers through the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014*. CBP allocated the officers to 44 out of 328 Ports of Entry, with the greatest need based on our Workload Staffing Model. In May 2015, CBP issued the “Resource Optimization Strategy at Ports of Entry Fiscal Year 2015” report to Congress. This report provides the latest Workload Staffing Model results and shows a nationwide need for an additional 2,624 CBP officers through Fiscal Year 2016, including an identified need for additional resources at Boston Logan International Airport. Your support of our ongoing efforts to secure these additional officers would be appreciated.

CBP recognizes the importance of trade and travel to both the Massachusetts economy and the overall economic vitality of the United States. The excessive wait times experienced recently at Boston Logan International Airport resulted from a confluence of events, including a technology outage. CBP will be sending an operational review team to Boston in the coming weeks to assess and resolve these issues. In the meantime, CBP welcomes the opportunity to brief you and your staff members in further detail.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact me at (202) 344-1620 or have a member of your staff contact Ms. Colleen Manaher, Executive Director, Planning, Program Analysis and Evaluation at (202) 344-3792.

Sincerely,



Todd C. Owen  
Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Field Operations

