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April 3, 2020

Acting Commissioner Mark A. Morgan
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20229

Dear Acting Commissioner Morgan,

I am writing to express concern over the proposed temporary reduction of hours at a number of Montana Ports of Entry. While reducing non-essential travel is critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting public health, a reduction in hours at these critical ports would harm our farmers and ranchers and disrupt essential services and commerce for the Montana communities that rely upon these ports.

The Del Bonita, Morgan, Opheim, Piegan, Raymond, and Turner ports of entry are essential for Montana agriculture, which is the largest economic driver in the state. Much of Montana lacks access to rail and relies on trucks for the shipments of fertilizer and other supplies that are required during the current planting season. As an example of how critically important maintaining existing hours at these ports is for my state, given the vast amount of farm and ranch land in Montana, there simply isn't enough fertilizer storage capacity to offset the reduction of around the clock shipments that come through these ports.

Montana's farmers and ranchers are critically important to the nation and our food supply, particularly in this time of national emergency where increased demand has strained supply chains. I urge you to take into account the impact these reductions will have on our agriculture industry and rural communities and reconsider your decision to reduce hours at Montana ports of entry.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator