

United States Senate

October 18, 2017

Ms. Kirstjen Nielsen
Principle Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Nielsen:

It was a pleasure to meet today and discuss your strategy for defending our homeland. Thank you for your service dedicated to improving our Nation's security, especially cybersecurity, and your willingness to shoulder more responsibility, now as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As we discussed, I would like to extend a formal invitation to visit Montana to tour the Northern border.

One of the greatest successes of this Administration has been the result of President Trump signaling that the United States will enforce its laws. This has led to quantifiable improvements at DHS, under the leadership of Gen. John Kelly. Apprehension rates for illegal Southwest border crossings have dropped nearly 30 percent year-to-date, compared to the same timeframe in 2016, and some months have seen an over 60 percent reduction. Drug seizures have increased by many measures. And, morale has improved by upwards of seven percent, according to Acting Secretary Elaine Duke at a recent Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing. I have confidence that you will maintain this positive trajectory and look forward to continued updates on this end.

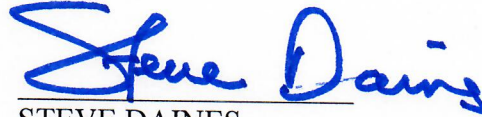
While security efforts along the Southern border are of critical importance, we cannot not lose sight of our Northern border. Canada is a close friend and ally, however we must ensure our shared border does not become an opportunity for those who would do us harm.

Robust staffing and execution of DHS's responsibilities along the Northern border are not only important to our national security, but also to our state's and Nation's economic wellbeing. Canada is our largest export market, purchasing over \$320 billion of American-made goods and services in 2016 and supporting 1.6 million American jobs. Last year, Canada purchased \$635 million of goods from Montana – 46.7 percent of the state's total exports – supporting over 26,000 Montana jobs.

As we also discussed, technology and telecommunications infrastructure has removed geography as a barrier to economic opportunity in rural communities. Montana has become home to a vibrant business community, with entrepreneurs starting and growing world class businesses. However, cybersecurity threats continue to pose a high risk to both established and burgeoning companies. I look forward to continuing the collaboration as the Department continues to develop cyber protections, resiliencies, and reliability.

I look forward to hosting you in Montana and working closely to further secure our border, enhance cybersecurity, facilitate lawful international travel and trade, and stem the flow of illegal drugs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Daines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

STEVE DAINES
United States Senator