

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

October 16, 2024

Troy A. Miller
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner
U. S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Acting Commissioner Miller:

I write to urge U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to list the Cloverleaf property, owned by the Thousand Island Bridge Authority (TIBA), as a potential site under the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) facility in the Wellesley Island Border Patrol Station Area of Responsibility (AOR). Unlike other options on the table, the Cloverleaf property has the strong support of local and state elected officials, as well as many hundreds of residents living in the Thousand Islands area. I urge you to carefully listen to this public input, as residents feel this property would not only support CBP's essential services but also benefit the Thousand Islands community as a whole.

I appreciate the efforts of CBP officials in working with my office, local officials, and the Thousand Islands community to organize two public meetings in June 2024 to gather input from residents who would be affected by the proposed new USBP station. During these meetings, many hundreds of local residents and interested stakeholders voiced their opposition to the proposed Blind Bay and Dockside Cottages sites currently under consideration in CBP's SEA process. Community members overwhelmingly advocated for the Cloverleaf property, citing its potential to meet CBP's operational needs while fostering trust through collaboration with the local community.

As highlighted by community members in their communications to CBP, the Cloverleaf property offers numerous advantages and substantially satisfies the site evaluation criteria set out by CBP. Centrally located in the Wellesley Island AOR, the TIBA site consists of multiple shovel-ready parcels with municipal water and sewer from which CBP could obtain a rectangular, 10+ acre site that allows for the main administrative portion of the proposed USBP facility to be set back from the shoreline and positioned away from the bridge to mitigate many potential security concerns. The site is in close proximity I-81, NYS Route 12, and the Thousand Islands Bridge, providing easy access to major north / south and east / west transportation channels, as well as Wellesley Island, enhancing operational efficiency and ease of access for emergency response. The area around the Cloverleaf property is zoned for "Public Services" and is surrounded by commercial developments that offer essential amenities for Border Patrol personnel and their families.

Additionally, the Cloverleaf property features direct water access with existing dockage and boat ramp facilities, along with ample waterfront area for future expansion as needed. Compared to the other sites being considered, the Cloverleaf property's deep-water access eliminates the need for regular dredging, streamlining construction, permitting, and maintenance processes, and its location along a section of the St. Lawrence River near the Thousand Islands Bridge that doesn't form ice in winter provides waterfront that is useable year-round, improving access for emergency

response. As to certain critiques of the Cloverleaf property made by CBP, local supporters cite to numerous examples of USBP facilities that are neither located on the water nor have direct water access, including the Massena, Oswego, Rochester, Grand Island, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Erie, and Detroit USBP facilities. In each of these instances, CBP has been able to effectively discharge their duties and uphold their mission without direct water access.

In light of the foregoing, I sincerely hope that you will consider this property as a viable option for the new USBP station. It represents not just a location, but an opportunity to strengthen our national security while fostering community collaboration. Such collaboration would ultimately create a more cohesive environment where everyone feels invested in mutual safety and would lay the groundwork for a stronger, more resilient community partnership, united in its commitment to national security and local well-being. Moreover, the proposed Border Patrol station would complement existing local facilities, such as the NYS Trooper Station and NYS Welcome Center, promoting a cohesive security presence in the region.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

CC: Jason Owens, United States Border Patrol Chief