**National Association of Maritime Organizations**



**Identify Opportunities to Minimize Effects**

**of Insufficient Staffing**

June 14, 2018

# Background

No doubt very little background information is necessary to introduce the subject of CBP staffing deficiencies. With the advent of post-9/11 legislation, CBP has faced dramatically increasing responsibilities enforcing not only its own regulations but also those of other agencies, most notably USDA and FDA. Additionally, after a decade of decreasing cargo volumes, international trade is again on the rise, with greater volumes demanding additional resources.

NAMO joins CBP, the Congress, and other industry associations in supporting increased staffing at our nation’s seaports of entry. We sincerely appreciate measures Congress has taken to provide additional funding.

However, that CBP has been unable to fill its allotted positions is of great concern. Equally troubling is the fact that the current Administration is placing substantially greater emphasis on security at southern land border ports than its predecessors and failing to recognize the importance of facilitating commerce at seaports as a means to help secure the nation’s economic security.

Seaports continue to face delays in vessel and cargo processing. Private industry is being asked to pay to supplement day-time activity by funding overtime activities. CBPOs are continuously asked to do more.

# Proposed Solutions

Clearly, we cannot solve this problem during a one-hour, multi-topic meeting. NAMO recommends that CBP approach its staffing dilemma as it has other challenges: by convening an agency-industry working group dedicated to addressing this specific issue.

We know CBP has strived to minimize inspections, focusing primarily on high-risk cargo, to allow goods to move more quickly. This group would work with CBP to identify additional opportunities to speed the hiring process, reduce costly on-site exams in favor of remote inspections via technology, expand trusted carrier (e.g., C-TPAT or AQUA) programs, and discover other possible initiatives geared toward facilitating commerce while allowing CBP to meet its important missions.