

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

March 22, 2022

Acting Chief John P Petrilla  
Environmental Branch  
Border Patrol & Air and Marine PMO  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
24000 Avila Road, Suite 5020  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Dear Acting Chief Petrilla:

I write to express my opposition with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's application to build an expanded facility in the Blind Bay area at Fisher's Landing located in the Town of Orleans, New York. I join with environmental groups, businesses, elected officials, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and residents who are concerned that this project will have detrimental effects on wildlife ecosystems, tourism and everyday life for residents.

Blind Bay has been home to 53 species of fish including the most prolific muskellunge spawning area in the St. Lawrence River basin. This habitat has been used in recovery efforts to restore fish populations impacted by habitat loss and invasive species. These critical fish and wildlife habitats that exist in the shallow undeveloped bay support shoreline protection, flood reduction, biodiversity and nature education to name just a few of their benefits. The construction of the Customs and Border Protection Facility in the Blind Bay area could significantly impact the future of these important habitats. The proposed docks at the new facility would require extensive dredging that would damage the important one of a kind habitats. Dock structures are also known to attract devastating invasive species such as zebra mussels. Once settled and established in an environment they can alter food webs and change water chemistry by removing nutrients that native fish species require to survive. The fish species that call Blind Bay home must be preserved and protected. This required their habit not being disturbed by dredging or in any other way.

In addition to wildlife, many people call the Blind Bay area home. Hotels, attractions and over 300 homes are across the river from the proposed new facility. People live and visit this part of the Thousand Islands to enjoy the natural beauty. The proposed large multi building industrial facility that requires a significant amount of lighting would be a detriment to the natural beauty that the North Country offers. Many people visit and have homes in the community to escape and recharge from city life. The Town of Orleans and Jefferson County have invested millions of dollar to maintain their businesses and waterfront and improve their infrastructure. This proposed facility would reverse that progress and have a detrimental impact on the local economy.

I have the upmost respect and appreciation for the work that United States Customs and Border Protection Agents do every day. Our country owes a great debt of gratitude to our law enforcement that can never be adequately paid. Our community and country continue to thrive because of the hard work of these individuals. I agree that a new and larger facility is needed to carry out your vital services. However, I strongly urge you to consider and chose a different

location that could fit the agencies needs without detrimentally impacting the wildlife ecosystems, tourism and everyday life for residents in the Blind Bay area.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

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