

XXIV BORDER GOVERNORS CONFERENCE UNITED STATES-MEXICO

JOINT DECLARATION August 24th and 25th, 2006

PREAMBLE

The Governors of the states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Sonora and Tamaulipas of the United Mexican States, and the Governors of the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas of the United States of America, meeting in the city of Austin, Texas on August 24 and 25, 2006, having analyzed, during the XXIII Conference of the United States-Mexico Border Governors, the topics related to Agriculture, Border Crossings, Economic Development, Education, Energy, Environment, Health, Science and Technology, Security and Tourism, Water, and Wildlife; and

WHEREAS

The United States of America and the United Mexican States are two sovereign and independent nations, each with its own clear identity;

These sovereign nations share a border of nearly two thousand miles, as well as common values and a vision for the prosperity of the border region;

The United States-Mexico border region is one of the most dynamic regions of the world, where the border is not a line that divides our countries but a bond that unites us and invites us to work together for mutual benefit;

Current international conditions have magnified the strategic role of the border region and compelled us to cooperate more than ever with both federal governments to ensure greater security and efficiency on the border;

The border states recognize that the positive impact on the economy and global competitiveness of the region will be defined by the development of joint strategies to enhance competitiveness through the development of human capital and construction of scientific and technological capacity;

The ten states comprising the United States-Mexico border region have collaborated through the institution of the Border Governors Conference for over two decades;

The Border States, united as never before by common interests and open dialogue, are determined to seize this opportunity to achieve unprecedented bilateral cooperation;

The Border States reiterate their commitment to open economies and social advancement for the benefit of the inhabitants of the region;

The frequent work meetings held between the governments of the border states have made it possible to establish a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and consultation, as well as a close working relationship among the border Governors;

The relationship among the border governors continues to generate cooperation between the states, for the prosperity and improvement of the quality of life for the inhabitants of the region;

We, the border governors, endorse this Joint Declaration and hereby adopt the following topics of significant importance toward the development of the border region:

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Review the evaluation of the Binational Agroterrorism Workshop and determine the top three issues in need of coordination. Take appropriate steps to increase coordination and communication to the extent possible.

Continue to develop the Nutrition Working Group as an outlet to share ideas, accomplish goals and improve current systems. Invite the Education Work Table and the Health Work Table to participate in this working group.

Gather information about the current standards for animal and plant health and food safety operating in the Border States. Higher standards can then be identified and eventually established to harmonize systems through all ports of entry.

Prioritize access for live U.S. cattle (including beef cattle) to Mexican import markets.

BORDER CROSSINGS

Request that the federal government designate funding and adopt a border-wide schedule to accelerate SENTRI and FAST lane projects. Promote "[A New Vision for Trade Along the U.S. - Mexico Border](#)" from the Border Legislative Conference. (Shared recommendation with the Environment Worktable.)

Request that the U.S. Department of State apply Executive Order 13337 solely to new border crossings, given that, as it is currently applied, projects of any scale in existing border crossings are required to obtain a Presidential Permit. Allow the Border Governors Conference to be a "consulting agency" for policy issues pertaining to transportation topics that have an impact on border crossings.

Request that U.S.' and Mexico's federal, state, regional and local agencies work with the Joint Working Committee and the U.S.-Mexico Border Crossings Binational Working Group to launch a pilot program to coordinate long-term budget and planning processes related to the establishment of new border crossing booths as well as the improvement of existing ones in the border region of both countries.

Request that the U.S. government accept, beyond a passport, other alternative and reasonable documents as identification for its citizens who are entering the United States by land. Also, request the design of strategies to minimize the negative economic impact to both countries' border regions resulting from the implementation the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. (Shared recommendation with the Tourism and Economic Development work tables.)

Acknowledge the importance of the study of the logistics involved in the cross border movements of people and goods across our common border. Hence, The Border Crossings Work Table will study, analyze and make appropriate recommendations on this subject to the XXV Border Governors Conference in Sonora, México.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hold the 2nd Binational Border Forum on Business and Industrial Clusters. Include the following clusters: automotive, information technology, aerospace, renewable energy and *maquila* exports.

Promote and hold a Regional Border Workshop on Supply Chain Development to assist small and medium sized companies to become a part of and sell their products to the regional large-industry

chains and their respective T1 and T2 suppliers through labor contracts.

Promote the implementation of the Binational Economic Development Certification and Training Program to create and expand commercial ties between Mexico and the US as well as to make the most out of the business opportunities amongst the residents of the border region.

Promote border competitiveness by raising awareness of regional economic strengths and enhancing innovation capacity in industries of opportunity such as biosciences and agriculture, renewable energies, high technology, transportation and logistics, and tourism.

EDUCATION

Support the continuity of funds from the Mexican federal government for the growth of English as a Second Language in elementary schools along the Mexican Border States. The US Border States will continue supporting these efforts by sharing educational methods and training for Mexican teachers; and also, they will enhance English language instruction for Hispanic students with limited English proficiency, to the extent permitted by law in each respective state.

Require the host state of each year's Border Governors Conference to create and manage a single official website promote, communicate and memorialize the varied activities and accomplishments of the Border Governors Conferences, Commissions and work tables.

Strengthen existing programs, such as the Transfer Document for Binational Migrant Students, to ease academic continuity and have students from elementary and middle schools enter into their corresponding educational level. Also, develop and promote new exchange programs amongst the Mexico and US Border States to promote and improve students' academic, linguistic, health, cultural, social and emotional success.

Foster innovators and innovations through education systems. Further, Regions of Innovation are defined by several criteria that measure the capacity to enhance innovation and discovery through research, industry competition and education including quality of educational systems and partnerships with universities. Border States should create forums for sharing best practices in math, science, and technology instruction as well as research to enhance the Border States' standing as a Region of Innovation.

ENERGY

Update the border energy infrastructure information for each of the states periodically. Develop an index of state and federal regulations for granting permits and licenses for energy projects in both sides of the border. Also, update periodically the requirements for future energy needs along the border region.

Create an index to identify industries with high energy consumption. Estimate potential savings that could be achieved by improving energy efficiencies in these large industrial consumers. Identify which industries have the largest potential to save energy.

Strengthen the promotion and development of renewable energy projects. Act as liaison for the implementation of financing programs across international institutions that support renewable energy projects as well as savings and efficient use of energy in industrial consumers.

Analyze issues on cross-border trade of electricity and natural gas, and closely follow the price of natural gas. These issues should include limitations and opportunities.

Look for the opportunity to work on comprehensive projects using technology transfers, financing and training programs for the Mexican mining concessionaries given that, recently, the Mexican Senate

granted permission to said concessionaires to extract and use methane gas derived from mineral coal reservoirs.

ENVIRONMENT

Identify the needs of each community in the US-Mexico border region to support continuous monitoring of particulate matter, and make a request to the EPA to consider the synergistic effect of emission sources on shared airsheds in its proposed rule amendments to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2006. These communities are typically comprised of smaller populations and industrial sources on the U.S. side, whereas on the Mexican side they are large metropolitan cities and industrial sources. For these reasons, request that the EPA continue supporting air quality monitoring programs in the border region.

Congratulate BECC-NADBank for the recent creation of their combined Board. We look forward to having both institutions implement and consolidate the recent changes incorporated to their charter as they continue to certify and finance environmental infrastructure projects for the benefit of the border state residents. Also, make a request to both institutions to define coordination protocols with the Environment Work Table of the Border Governors Conference to improve the performance and evaluation of their actions at the local level.

Applaud SEMARNAT's leadership for its continued efforts to improve air quality in the border region that resulted in new regulations for the mandatory use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel in Mexico; and look forward to this agency's meeting, in a timely manner, the 2007 deadline for having this new fuel available in the border region. Along the same line, we recognize and support the Border Legislative Conference's new proposal entitled "A New Vision for Trade along the US-Mexico Border", in particular its goal of promoting the retrofitting of commercial-vehicles' engines with innovative technologies, such as the use of natural gas systems. However, due to the increased wait times and traffic at border ports and the direct impact this has on air quality for our border communities, we urge both federal governments to assess such impacts and the appropriate measures that can be taken to protect human health and the environment.

HEALTH

Expand the four existing Technical Work Groups of the Health Work Table to include Planning for Pandemic Influenza. Also, coordinate with federal officials to develop mutual assistance and cooperation protocols to prevent, protect, and respond to threats on both sides of the border.

Request the United States Department of Health and Human Services and Mexico's Secretariat of Health to include the border states in binational preparedness planning for pandemic influenza, in coordination with the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP); provide dedicated funding to the US-Mexico border region for public health emergency preparedness and response; allow flexibility to use these funds in accordance with specific needs, identified by risk level, and allow the ability to utilize the funds over multiple years; require binational, state-to-state collaboration to develop and implement joint annual work plans for public health emergency preparedness and response; and continue to promote actions in the areas of health education, healthy living and disease prevention through the Binational Health Week.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Assess, from a global competitiveness perspective, the Border States' current science and technology capacities, industry needs, and common infrastructures. These assessments will form the basis of the border region marketing plan and will determine the areas for investment from state resources and private capital to facilitate economic growth in the region. Existing organizations and available resources for said purpose, such as the Bi-National Sustainability Laboratory (BNSL), the

United States-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC), and others, could participate in this process.

Establish Border Angel Investment Networks to improve the likelihood of attracting capital once the companies have become ready to participate in the market with their products or services.

SECURITY

Further work on the creation of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) system that will allow the participating states to share specific criminal information related to judicial mandates or criminal backgrounds, police officer registry, vehicle database, auto theft and recoveries, drivers licenses, organized crime gangs, fugitives, missing persons, drug traffickers, terrorists and human smugglers.

Create a sub-committee to address these issues. The goal of the sub-committee shall be to recommend to the Work Table the training needs and protocols for equipment exchange and operations to combat these emergencies.

Establish actions that will enable training and professional development for the police corps in the participating states, whereby these states can provide programs and instructors in areas considered vital to public safety.

TOURISM

Develop tours or tourist activities among neighboring states. The strengthening of varied choices for tourism activities is of vital importance to maximize the enormous potential for developing cross-border tourism in the US and Mexican neighboring states. Promote the creation of routes, tours and tourist products among the states with greatest geographic and market affinity so as to strengthen the regional offer and create new waves of cross-border travelers.

Request an in-depth evaluation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Analyze with detail the ramifications of the WHTI and its effects on the dynamics of the border region. Promote actions to mitigate the negative impacts on tourism that the implementation of the WHTI might have; such actions shall include the development of studies, lobbying and information campaigns.

Develop a research program to obtain more information about the border region. Work with research experts to formalize an agreement to obtain and process information related to tourism along the border region. Specify the deliverables to be provided by the researchers in order to disseminate border region data to interested stakeholders in a useful, applicable format.

WATER

Develop a pilot project for conservation and better usage of surface waters along the border region (Rio Grande) for the benefit of the current water-rights holders.

Request the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank to implement actions to reduce the length of time taken to develop, certify, approve financing and build the necessary infrastructure projects to fulfill their mandate along the US-Mexico border.

Commend the US and Mexico International Boundary and Water Commission for hosting a successful Rio Grande/Río Bravo Water Summit on November of 2005. Furthermore, encourage publication of the proceedings and resolutions from the Summit.

WILDLIFE

Establish the commitment of a U.S. legislator to introduce the Borderlands Wildlife and Wildlife

Habitat Conservation bill into Congress. The Border States have concurred that fundraising is the top priority for the Wildlife Work Table.

Establish priority conservation actions for flora and fauna along the US-Mexico border so as to identify, bilaterally, key shared species and thus learn which are endemic, of conservation priority, invasive, or of special interest to each of the states and regions individually. Define areas of special interest and establish guidelines for the implementation of short, medium, and long-term conservation actions for selected species. Strengthen national and international cooperation through information exchange, experience sharing and training. Identify and allocate human, financial and material resources for the conservation of selected species.

Identify funding sources and request funds to support technological exchange and transfer activities as well as training in the areas of wildlife surveying, ecosystems comprehensive management, design/implementation of databases and information systems, and law enforcement.

Addendum 1 Technical Secretariat

The creation of a Technical Secretariat is ratified, so as to follow up with the various agreements and commitments entered into at the Border Governors Conference.

Addendum 2 Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

The Border Governors Conference, through its Economic Development, Tourism and Border Crossings Work Tables will analyze—in an urgent fashion—the impact that the US Government's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will have by mandating its citizens to present a passport as sole means of official identification as of December 31, 2007. The results and suggestions will be presented at the next Border Governors Conference.

Addendum 3 North American Development Bank

The Border Governors Conference supported the consolidation of the NADB as an institution to promote regional development and support comprehensive financial feasibility for border projects in the short, medium and long terms.

Addendum 4 Logistics and International Crossings Work Table

The Border Governors Conference agreed to modify the name of the Border Crossings Work Table to Logistics and International Crossings Work Table, with the exception that, if the topics were to become incompatible, a Work Table dealing exclusively with logistics will be created prior to the 25th Border Governors Conference in the state of Sonora.

Addendum 5 Joint Declaration on the Principles of Security, Immigration and Economic Development

We, the governors of the states of Texas, Sonora, Arizona, Baja California, California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, New Mexico, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas jointly renew our commitment to work together to eradicate criminal activity near and across the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Border States pledge to cooperate across their respective borders to be vigilant in the swift detection and deterrence of criminal activity at the border, and the swift apprehension of criminals

who are endangering the lives and property of our residents. We recognize that smugglers of drugs and arms, and commercial smugglers of people, are a common enemy to be targeted with cross-border coordination and cooperation by local, state and federal law enforcement authorities. In matters of criminal activity, border security is a shared responsibility of the federal governments of both countries. Therefore, we urge the federal governments of the United States of America and the United States of Mexico to provide immediate resources required to offset the enormous burden imposed on the Border States and local governments.

We urge the Congress of the United States of America and the Federal Congress of the United States of Mexico to pass laws criminalizing the construction, financing and use of property for tunnels crossing the US-Mexico border. Specifically, we support laws that would provide significant criminal penalties for persons constructing or financing such tunnels or allowing the use of property for a tunnel, or for using a tunnel or subterranean passage to evade detection in the smuggling of persons, weapons, drugs, terrorists or illegal goods.

At the state level, we are committed to improving regional security by coordinating with our counterparts through information sharing regarding human, drug, and arms trafficking, and other criminal activity. We urge our federal governments to do the same.

We believe that a comprehensive solution to border security must rely on an array of measures and that physical obstacles alone are not the solution. We urge the United States Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform by the end of this year.

We urge our respective federal governments to take steps toward improving the economic prosperity of its residents.



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