



VII BORDER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

UNITED STATES – MEXICO

MARCH 25-27, 2004

CHIHUAHUA, CHIHUAHUA

JOINT DECLARATION

**BY AND BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS,
THE MEMBERS OF THE BORDER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**

AND

THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



WHEREAS

The Border Legislative Conference is a program administered by the Council of State Governments – *WEST* and its regional partner in the South, the Southern Legislative Conference, that serves as a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and collaboration among state legislators of the United States and Mexico;

The goal of the Border Legislative Conference is to empower border state legislators to engage in the Mexico and U.S. binational agenda and provide input and direction in the development of policy between both countries; foster the development of shared solutions along the border region through joint consideration of common problems and exchange of information; and establish strategic partnerships with multi-level governments and governmental organizations to the end that border communities and state governments on both sides of the border may be strengthened and improved;

The Border Legislative Conference is supported by the United States Agency for International Development, which provides development assistance around the world;

The United States Agency for International Development is committed to the goals of the Border Legislative Conference and supportive of the program's efforts to assist legislatures in performing an expanded role in policy development, and in enhancing their legislative capacity;

In October 2003, the United States Agency for International Development awarded The Council of State Governments a three-year grant extension through fiscal year 2006 for the ongoing implementation of the Border Legislative Conference;

The border states, in partnership with the federal governments and the private sector, share a responsibility for the development and state of United States – Mexico border region; current international conditions, as well as the unique understanding that border residents and officials have of the dynamic realities of the region, have magnified the strategic role and demand of state legislators to cooperate more fully than ever before;

State legislatures along the United States – Mexico border region, increasingly, have developed into laboratories of policy innovation on a variety of areas that affect the border region, including public education, health, economic development, traffic infrastructure and the environment;

The frequent exchanges and outreach strategies pursued between state legislators through the Border Legislative Conference have made it possible to establish a mechanism for continuous dialogue and consultation, as well as the development of close working relationships among border state legislators;

The relationship among border state legislators should continue to generate greater opportunities for cooperation between the United States and Mexico for the prosperity and improvement of the quality of life for the inhabitants of the border region;

THEREFORE

The Council of State Governments, the United States Agency for International Development, and the legislators of the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas of the United States of America, and the legislators of the states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, and Tamaulipas of the United Mexican States, that constitute the Border Legislative Conference, meeting in the City of Chihuahua, Chihuahua, on March 25-26, 2004, hereby endorse this Joint Declaration to reaffirm their support and commitment to the goals and objectives of the Border Legislative Conference.

Diputado Ricardo Castro Lopez
Chair of the BLC

Senator Robert Cannell
Vice Chair of the BLC

Edward Kadunc
USAID Mission Director, Mexico City