



## **BORDER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**

19th Legislative Forum

Tampico, Tamaulipas

March 5-6, 2009

### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Legislators from the U.S. – Mexico border states convened March 5-6, 2009 in Tampico, Tamaulipas for the 19<sup>th</sup> Border Legislative Conference. The Conference also included the participation of legislators from Mexico's Federal Chamber of Deputies. Participating legislators had the opportunity to openly discuss issues of great importance in the bilateral relationship, including the Merida Initiative, agriculture, the environment and the current economic crisis and its impacts in the border region.

The members of the Border Legislative Conference adopted the following actions/declarations:

#### **Merida Initiative**

The members of the Border Legislative Conference expressed support for the vision and efforts of the federal governments of Mexico and the U.S. in implementing the Merida Initiative aimed at combating organized crime and promoting security along the border. Lawmakers agreed to ask the federal governments of both countries, including the respective federal Congress' and agencies, to enhance coordination with state governments and sharing of resources in the implementation of the Merida Initiative. Border legislators also expressed and agreed to work with the Border Governors Conference and the state public security entities to identify actions to strengthen the Initiative's strategy, including actions by U.S. states to reduce arms trafficking to Mexico.

#### **Agriculture**

The members of the Border Legislative Conference adopted the recommendations of the Border Legislative Conference Agriculture Work Group, which convened the Binational Agriculture Legislative Forum last January 9, 2009 in McAllen, Texas. The Border Legislative Conference Agriculture Work Group was coordinated by Representative Ryan Guillen State of Texas and Diputado Felipe Garza Narvaez of the Tamaulipas State Legislature. The recommendations adopted were:

- Expressed the necessity to promote the harmonization of regulations and public policies for the sustainability of the border agriculture sector;
- Solicit the increase of state funds, as well as federal assistance in both countries, to strategically face the challenges of fever ticks through prevention and control programs;
- Solicit state agriculture entities along the U.S. – Mexico border region to increase their cooperation to develop binational strategies to combat fever ticks, establishing practices to control including contingency plans and other measures;
- Participating legislators recognized the importance of maintaining and protecting fish and wildlife along the Falcon and Amistad Dams and agreed to solicit the appropriate entities in both countries to enhance surveillance to reduce and eliminate illegal fishing. Additionally, it was recommended that joint capacity training be conducted among state representatives to facilitate understanding and cooperation; and
- Participating legislators expressed the need to establish greater coordination with the Agriculture Work Table of the Border Governors Conference to strengthen binational, state efforts.

## **Environment**

The members of the Border Legislative Conference agreed to continue working on the identification, promotion and introduction of state legislation aimed at better controlling and management of waste tires. The members of the Border Legislative Conference also agreed to solicit the federal environment entities of Mexico and the U.S., including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), to further expand efforts to reduce waste tire piles as part of the Border 2012 Environment Program.

The Border Legislative Conference and the Environment Work Table of the Border Governors Conference conducted a joint meeting in San Francisco, California, to promote greater environmental legislative - executive coordination at the state level. The goal of the meeting was to take concrete action on issues of waste tires and air quality and report on these shares during the next meeting of the Border Governors Conference to be held in the State of Nuevo Leon.

## **Impact of Economic Crisis on the Border Belt**

The members of the Border Legislative Conference called on the federal governments of both countries for greater coordination in the development of infrastructure projects along the border to increase the efficient use of funds to be distributed as part of U.S. Economic Stimulus Rescue Package. The federal investment in both countries to promote transportation projects, including international roads and bridges, will be important to reduce the impacts of the current economic crisis. Additionally, legislators expressed the need for states to identify and promote regional economic development strategies.