



SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

16th Border Legislative Conference
Santa Fe, New Mexico
October 19, 2007

State legislators of the United States and Mexico border states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, along with the participation of federal legislators from the Population, Borders, and Migration Affairs Committee of Mexico's Chamber of Deputies, convening in Santa Fe, New Mexico on October 19, 2007 for the 16th Border Legislative Conference, adopted the following declarations and actions:

ENVIRONMENT: WASTE TIRES

The members of the Border Legislative Conference strongly reaffirmed the need to establish state and local regulatory frameworks to track, manage, and develop final uses of waste tires along the U.S. – Mexico border region. The members of the Border Legislative Conference expressed:

- Support of the Border Governors Conference 2007 Joint Declaration related to the management, final disposal, development of markets and implementation of regulatory tools to address waste tire piles along the border region;
- Support of the U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT Tire Initiative, including its Principles and Actions;
- The need to share information of the Tire Initiative's principles and actions among border municipalities and solicit input from local government officials on joint state-local government collaboration strategies;
- Solicit U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT training and education efforts at border state legislatures, including key legislative committees;
- The need to reinvigorate legislative efforts aimed at the development of harmonized set of management or regulatory frameworks on the quantification, collection, proper hauling, disposal, and possible end uses of used and waste tires along the border;
- Direct BLC staff to, within the next 60-days, provide BLC members, legislative leadership and key committees within each of the 10 U.S. – Mexico border states information of model legislation and programs aimed at addressing waste tires along the border region.

ENVIRONMENT: BORDER ENVIRONMENT INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The members of the Border Legislative Conference reiterated their strong support for increased funding by the U.S. Congress of the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF). The BEIF, which is supported by grant resources from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and administered by the North American Development Bank (NADBank), helps finance the construction of water and wastewater projects along the U.S. – Mexico border region. The objective of the BEIF is to make environmental infrastructure projects affordable for communities throughout the border region by combining grant funds with loans or other forms of financing. The program also leads to additional funding matches provided by the Mexican government.

The members directed the Border Legislative Conference’s Environment Committee to send correspondence and communicate with appropriate congressional members and committees expressing the Border Legislative Conference’s support of this important funding mechanism that supports environment infrastructure projects along the U.S. – Mexico border region.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

United States and Mexico border legislators expressed the need to enact effective policies that deter and punish individuals or groups involved in the trafficking of persons, including sexual trafficking and labor trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion along international borders.

The members of the Border Legislative Conference unanimously affirmed the following declarations and actions:

- Support state legislation aimed at preventing cross-border human trafficking;
- Encourage border legislatures to consider legislative efforts that strengthen and harmonize penalties of persons or groups involved in human trafficking;
- Urge the Attorneys General of the 10 U.S. – Mexico border states to work collaboratively to dismantle cross-border human trafficking and smuggling networks, and to provide input on state policies that can enhance such efforts;
- Directed BLC staff to share adopted legislation on human trafficking to border legislators and appropriate legislative committees; and
- Encourage the Border Legislative Conference’s Health Committee, headed by Senator Mary Jane Garcia (NM) and Diputada Leticia Amparano Gamez (SON), to continue working with governmental, as well as non-governmental organizations such as PROTEJA and PRODERECHO, to promote information sharing and identification of effective enforcement of human trafficking efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: COMPETITIVENESS

The members of the Border Legislative Conference reaffirmed their commitment to promoting safe, fast and smart commercial and pedestrian crossings along the United States and Mexico border region through:

- Support of federal “one stop” commercial crossings and secure manufacturing legislation;
- Ongoing support of the Border Legislative Conference’s Secure Manufacturing Zones concept at all major U.S.-Mexico ports to enable fast, secure, and smart movement of people and products; and
- Consideration of state legislative proposals that encourage investments, via tax incentives, in cargo supply chain security and efficiency processes to promote the development of Secure Manufacturing Zones.

The Secure Manufacturing Zones concept, which was adopted by the members of the Border Legislative Conference in December 2005, entails the equipping of commercial vehicles and manufacturing facilities with advanced technologies to enable point of origin monitoring and clearance of commercial cargo, supply chain visibility, and the system’s integration to high priority corridors. The concept also promotes the retrofitting of commercial vehicles’ engines with innovative, clean natural gas systems and necessary refueling infrastructure to improve the border region’s air quality and public health.

AGRICULTURE

The Officers of the Border Legislative Conference directed interested border legislators and program staff to identify and present recommendations on the topic of agriculture for the consideration of the members of the Border Legislative Conference at their next meeting. The recommendations are to include specific action-oriented policies and follow-up steps, including the potential development of an Agriculture Committee or Work Group for the Border Legislative Conference.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Senator Eliot Shapleigh of Texas rotates to the position of Chair for 2008. Participating legislators from the Mexican border states elected Diputado Francisco Javier Cantu Torres of Nuevo Leon as the 2008 Vice Chair of the Border Legislative Conference.

The members unanimously accepted the invitation by the members of the Coahuila delegation to convene the Seventeenth Border Legislative Conference in the State of Coahuila in the spring of 2008. The Forum will focus on the topics of 1) water management; 2) agriculture; 3) immigration; and 4) border crossings. The dates and specific location of the forum will be forthcoming.