



May 8, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20500

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador
 Palacio Nacional
 Pza de la Constitución, Centro, Cuauhtémoc,
 Ciudad de México, 06066

Dear President Biden and President López Obrador,

Our organizations write to you to convey our concerns about the security situation at the United States-Mexico border, which continues to place tremendous pressure on the very limited resources of city and county governments, and that has prompted federal and state government responses that have damaged the border business environment.

Thanks to the implementation of USMCA/T-MEC, our two countries are each other's top trading partners and we have made our shared region the most competitive trading bloc in the world. That lofty standing is in jeopardy unless your administrations take decisive action to mitigate the effects of undocumented migration at and between land border ports of entry.

We acknowledge that the complicated issues facing your administrations on the subject of migration preceded your time in office. Further, we share your frustration and that of communities from San Diego, California to Brownsville, Texas and from Tijuana, Baja California to Matamoros, Tamaulipas over the U.S. Congress' inability and unwillingness to adopt durable policy solutions to address the humanitarian crisis at the border, the diminished quality of life for border communities and states, and the devolving security environment. Irregular migration's negative effects are not just constrained to the border region; social service and public safety resources of cities in the interior are also under tremendous strain.

But absent federal solutions and greater cooperation between your two administrations that results in a dramatic reduction in asylum seekers arriving at our shared border, our communities and the businesses whose survival depends on a well-managed border will continue to pay a stiff price and the entire North American region could suffer severe economic harm.

Our organizations are concerned that certain policies implemented by states to address border security will do more harm than good. Policies focused on those who enter the U.S. without legal merit are understandable given the current porous border. For example, migrants should never cross in between ports of entry. Verification of all people and goods entering our countries is a must. And state agencies have an important role to play in truck safety and code enforcement, for example. But such inspections should be conducted in a manner that does not increase congestion around ports of entry and cause shipping delays, which puts upward pressure on the prices of consumer goods and important manufacturing inputs and could harm productive businesses and the employees who are responsible for ensuring fast, efficient trade.

In fact, our two countries should be doing everything possible at all levels of government to expedite legal trade as nearshoring accelerates, and to make our manufacturing, energy, and agricultural sectors more competitive with China.

Still, without substantive steps to address our nations' immigration challenges in a comprehensive way, we should anticipate continued federal and state-level actions that will do very little to solve the immigration crisis and will make matters worse.

We understand that Mexico is now largely a transit country for migrants and that the U.S. is the destination. This means that the U.S. must change its border protocols and its law to stop the gaming of its asylum laws, which only benefits the smugglers and cartels, as Mexico does more to secure its southern border and stop those heading north.

We appreciate that in your April 28 call with one another that migration was the major topic of conversation, and that you expressed a desire to strengthen the operational efficiency on our shared border. We strongly support your instructions to your respective national security teams to work together to immediately implement concrete measures to significantly reduce irregular border crossings. Doing so is essential.

We respectfully request that your administrations commit to the following:

- Working together to stem the tide of undocumented migrants arriving at the border with dubious asylum claims and stopping all unlawful and dangerous crossings between ports of entry.
- Assuring the trade community that port closures will not occur. Port closures are not just inconvenient – they put additional pressures on an already stretched North American supply chain and put upward pressure on consumer prices at a time of already high inflation.
- Assuring trade community stakeholders that staff to process legal trade and travel will not be redeployed to process asylum claims, most of which are likely to be without merit.

As business organizations in the U.S.-Mexico border region, we believe our two countries' bilateral relationship holds tremendous promise for the prosperity of our citizens. Together, we are increasing our competitive standing in relation to China, transforming the world economy by investing heavily in the semiconductor supply chain, and executing a trade agreement for the 21st century.

There is much to be done, however. We must work together to stamp out the scourge of illegal drug trafficking, including fentanyl, break up smuggling rings that prey on vulnerable migrants, and make our shared border more secure. These challenges require your joint leadership.

We cannot accept the status quo. Forceful action is required by your administrations to address these issues, or we are likely to continue to see policies implemented by the federal, state, and local governments that will only exacerbate the economic pain we are experiencing in the border region. This pain threatens to inflict economic damage in all of North America and reduce our competitiveness with other regions.

We thank you both for your attention to these issues and we look forward to working with each of you to ensure that our shared border and our immigration system is humane, secure, properly resourced, and well-managed.

Sincerely,

Border Trade Alliance
Texas Association of Business
Confederación de Cámaras Industriales de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Asociación Nacional de Transporte Privado
Border Pacific Railroad
BTA Alianza del Comercio Fronterizo México
Cámara de la Industria de Transformación de Nuevo León
Cámara Nacional de Industriales de la Leche
Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Conservas Alimenticias
Cámara Nacional de Manufacturas Eléctricas
Cámara Nacional de la Industria Textil
Cámara Nacional del Autotransporte de Carga
Cámara Nacional del Cemento
Cámara Minera de México
City of Brownsville
El Paso Chamber of Commerce
Engineered Transportation International
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
International Bank of Commerce
Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Laredo Economic Development Corporation
Laredo Motor Carriers Association
North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO)
Rio Grande Valley Partnership
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
Sunland Park, New Mexico Mayor Javier Perea
Texas International Produce Association
Texas Regional Bank
Texas Trucking Association