

February 8, 2021

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20528

**Re: CONTINUED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BORDER COMMUNITIES -
ARBITRARY LAND-BORDER TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS**

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Buttigieg:

Congratulations on your historic confirmations. As you “hit the ground running,” we would like to address The President’s direction to, within 14 days, ***“implement CDC guidelines consistent with applicable law, and take into account the operational considerations relevant to the different populations who enter the United States by land.”*** One of those populations entering by land are Mexican tourist visa holders.

We ask for your help to lift the land border restrictions against tourist visa holders.

American border cities like San Diego CA, Nogales AZ, Douglas AZ, Laredo TX and El Paso TX cannot begin economic recovery until the arbitrary, one-way restrictions placed on lawfully permitted tourist visa holders is lifted. In San Ysidro alone, we have gone from \$895M in retail sales to an expected \$225M for 2020. Again, this is not economy over health. The arbitrary border restrictions have been proven to have no impact on COVID spread. The County of San Diego, Health and Human Services has – for six months now – operated a free testing facility at the busiest US/MX land border crossing. The positive infection rates HAVE NEVER been higher at the border crossing than the rest of south San Diego County! Additionally, of those infected, only 16% had Mexican addresses. In fact, no positive rates anywhere along the border have been reported to be any higher than their surrounding communities.

The current, arbitrary land border restrictions have nothing to do with health. In fact, this practice is discriminatory. These restrictions and those who support them are discriminating against Mexican tourist visa holders (whose DNA does not make them any more susceptible to COVID than his/her American-born neighbor). These restrictions, and those who support them, are discriminating against border communities – as cargo was never touched, national companies are fine since their Toyotas, TV’s and other binationally produced products continue to flow. Regional companies are fine because their workforce continues to cross. Border communities are those that rely – economically, socially, and yes, health wise – on the daily and essential travel of tourist visa holders.

We ask for your help to lift the land border restrictions against tourist visa holders.

Restricting daily travelers between our countries, who invest in binational commerce through the goods and services they acquire, is hurting border communities more than COVID itself.

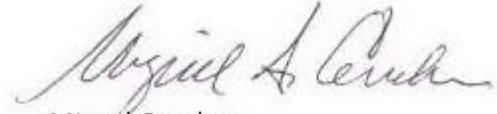
Sincerely,
US border community chambers of commerce:



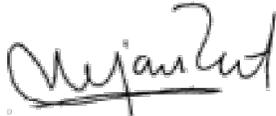
Jason M-B Wells
San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce
San Ysidro, CA



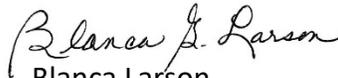
Isabel Georgelos
Tucson Hispanic CoC
Tucson, AZ



Miguel Conchas
Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Laredo, TX



Alejandra Mier y Teran
Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Otay Mesa, CA



Blanca Larson
Del Rio Chamber of Commerce
Del Rio, TX



William W. Davis, President
Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce
Eagle Pass, TX



Kaite B. Luna
Brawley Chamber of Commerce
Brawley, CA



Steve Ahlenius
McAllen Chamber of Commerce
McAllen, TX



Dafne Maldonado
San Benito County CoC
San Benito County, TX



David Jerome
El Paso Chamber of Commerce
El Paso, TX