



Our Mission is to Enrich, Lead and Foster the San Ysidro Business Community and our Bi-National Region.

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President's Circle



October 26, 2020

Ambassador Christopher Landau
U.S. Embassy Mexico City
Paseo de la Reforma 305, Col. Cuauhtemoc
06500 Mexico, CDMX

Sent Via Email

[Protocol USEmbMex@state.gov](mailto:USEmbMex@state.gov)

Re: **SURVIVAL OF BINATIONAL ECONOMIES
TERMINATION OF CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS BEFORE NOVEMBER 21**

Ambassador Landau:

As the US and MX continue responsible recovery efforts, neither San Diego, Tijuana, nor any other community along the US/MX border can even get out of the starting blocks due to the arbitrary, one-way restrictions placed on lawfully permitted tourist visa holders. The San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce represents 778 businesses within a 2-mile radius of the World's busiest land border. San Ysidro historically circulates **\$2.5 Billion** per year, with \$865M in retail sales. 95% of sales on San Ysidro Blvd are made by those crossing the border from Mexico. We have made 1,472 wellness calls to 736 business and can tell you, with certainty, that border restrictions to essential travel have decreased our border crossings by 53%. Only 65% of our businesses are operating... operating at a **55% revenue loss**.

Throughout the COVID crisis, we applaud efforts to protect international commercial goods movement and your work on USMCA. However, just as important to our border communities are international retail sales and the services trade. In fact, the US trade deficit with Mexico is a plus for the US when one considers local tourism and services - an \$8.0 Billion surplus! Unfortunately, the arbitrary border restrictions placed on our land ports of entry are devastating our local economies. In San Ysidro alone, 100 businesses have permanently closed due to not having access to their customers. That is 13% of our community's businesses... dead... due to a political policy. Regardless of measures across the United States to "recover" or "re-open" from the COVID-19 crisis, border communities from San Ysidro, CA to Brownsville, TX cannot – and will not – begin to recover without the restrictions at our land ports of entry (POE) being terminated. I have attached a letter from the Texas Border Coalition requesting the same of the acting DHS commissioner.

We must find a balance between the health of the individual and the health of local economies. The San Diego County Health Department has been executing COVID testing at our port of entry since August and have had results NO DIFFERENT than infection-rates already in Southern San Diego. If there are communities that feel they need protection at the border, DHS should be given the authority to implement case-by-case, per request, as in the attached letter by TX Congressman Henry Cuellar – **not a border-wide policy.**

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. We respectfully ask for your intervention as the foremost authority for our binational relationship to not allow border restrictions to persist beyond November 21, 2020.

Sincerely,


Jason M-B Wells
Executive Director



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Cc: US Consul General in Tijuana Sue Saarnio
US Senator Dianne Feinstein
US Senator Kamala Harris
CA Governor Gavin Newsom
Andrea R. Ramirez, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President and Director
of Hispanic Engagement, White House Office of Public Liaison
Victor De Leon, Chief, Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of DHS Commissioner
Acting Secretary Chad Wolf, US DHS
Pete Flores, Acting DFO San Diego, US CBP, DHS
CA Senator Ben Hueso
CA Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez
CA Assemblyman Todd Gloria
San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox
San Diego Mayor Kevin Falconer
Border Trade Alliance