



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

January 4, 2021

2020 - 2021 PNWER Executive Committee*

Recommendations for the New U.S. Administration with Regard to U.S.-Canada Relations

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The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) has a 30-year history of working with public and private sector stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest to find regional solutions to cross border challenges. PNWER facilitates cross-border collaboration and communication on a variety of issues impacting the economy through its 20 working groups, focused on the key economic sectors of the region. PNWER was chartered in 1991 by the legislatures of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon, and is the only statutory cross-border organization with a mission to address U.S.-Canada economic issues.

The following recommendations were developed in collaboration with PNWER executive committee members, key stakeholders, and input from our 20 working groups.

Recommendations

Trade and Regulatory Cooperation

U.S. Department of Commerce; U.S. Treasury Department

- PNWER encourages the U.S. and Canada to embrace the free trade framework provided by the USMCA, which benefits industries on both sides of the border.
- PNWER supports the Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) process and recognizes the importance it plays in facilitating cooperation between the U.S. and Canada. We encourage continued facilitation of harmonized regulatory standards.

COVID Recovery and Supply Chain Resilience

U.S. Department of Commerce

- U.S. and Canadian supply chains are deeply interconnected, and we must maintain this collaboration to ensure buyers, sellers, service providers, and experts can continue crossing the border to keep these relationships alive and trade flowing freely.
- COVID-19 exposed weaknesses in U.S. supply chains and has resulted in renewed interest for protectionist and 'Buy American' policies. While reshoring and cultivating local supply chains is important, the U.S. must preserve its reciprocal and collaborative supply chains across the Canadian border. As new global trade relationships are established, the U.S.-Canadian trade relationship is more important than ever.

*Partial listing

Safely Reopening the Border

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- The U.S. should work with Canada to develop a coordinated plan for the eventual safe reopening of the land border to non-essential travelers. This must include a discussion on reopening bi-national tourism.
- The U.S. and Canada must present a strong, safe, and well-coordinated border reopening message. Reopening the land border between the U.S. and Canada to non-essential travelers will be vital for the economic recovery of the border region and the reemergence of the bi-national tourism industry. Bi-national tourism brings sustainable income to small towns, especially as their economies move away from extractive industries. Coordinated reopening with clear guidelines aligned with public health recommendations will allow businesses to safely bring customers across the border and generate consumer confidence.
- PNWER supports the Future Borders Coalition's Four Principles to Implement a Phased Approach for Easing Canada-U.S. Border Closures and Other Travel Restrictions:
 1. A bi-national and coordinated approach should be adopted with the objective to develop mutually accepted risk-mitigating measures and health protocols
 2. Both governments should adopt a layered risk-based approach when reviewing entry requirements and travel restrictions
 3. A phased approach for easing border restrictions should be informed by science-based criteria and communicated based on easily understood requirements.
 4. The economic impact of border closures on communities should be carefully assessed by both governments and inform the path towards the easing of border restrictions.

Border Technology

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- Twenty-first century technology must be employed to ensure the health, safety, and security of our borders. PNWER supports the creation of pilot programs to test these new technologies in our border regions and urges the Biden Administration to provide funding for these projects.
- The Pacific Northwest hosts a wide variety of high-tech companies on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border, many of which have a vested interest in using technology to safely reopen travel. Technologies such as vicinity-readable RFID in documents, facial verification, and virtual adjudications can protect the health of border officers and travelers alike by creating a more seamless and touchless processing environment.
- PNWER urges the Biden Administration to fund pilot programs to trial run these technologies and border-crossing solutions.

Preclearance

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- We encourage a methodical process of implementing preclearance at the land, marine, and rail borders. In order to implement preclearance in the most effective and efficient way, we encourage new investment and research to ensure that commerce and tourism remain unhindered and ideally improved by the implementation of preclearance measures. This can only be accomplished by working together as a region to understand policy and economic hurdles and to find solutions. Maximum flexibility and creativity are required as this process unfolds across the region.

Columbia River Treaty

U.S. Department of State

- PNWER supports the continuation and modernization of the Columbia River Treaty.

Bi-National Energy Policy

U.S. Department of Energy

- Energy is an integral part of the U.S.-Canada trade relationship, with Canada being our largest energy trade partner (\$119b in 2019). The U.S.-Canada energy system is heavily integrated and includes cross-border pipelines and transmission. PNWER encourages the new administration to strategically address the long-term energy security needs of the U.S. and Canada and recognize the importance of this crucial and integrated energy system to the economic, safety, and security of the United States.
- PNWER hosts a bi-national energy policy course for state and provincial legislators to educate them on key energy topics that they are addressing in their legislative committees. We encourage continued investment in these types of programs to ensure our policymakers have a clear understanding of the North American energy picture. The Department of Energy should continue to support funding to educate state and local policymakers on best practices in energy policy.
- In order for states to achieve climate targets, multi-state planning must include Canadian provinces, because of our energy interdependencies. To achieve climate change goals and greater decarbonization, more funding is needed to address cross-border research, share best practices, and plan for the long-term infrastructure that will be needed to achieve those targets. This planning must include both public and private collaboration, for example on the future of green hydrogen.

Cross-Border Infrastructure

U.S. Department of Transportation

- PNWER urges the Biden Administration to fully fund a comprehensive transportation package with initiatives for innovative transportation modes, including expanded electrification options for vehicles and aircraft. This package should also include funding for the Regional Infrastructure Accelerator Demonstration Program, which was first created by Section 1441 of the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

- PNWER supports ongoing cooperation on cross-border infrastructure development, especially the creation of a High Speed Rail service from Vancouver, BC to Portland, OR.

Aquatic Invasive Species

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- PNWER actively advocates for the importance of aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention, especially along the U.S.-Canadian border.
- We encourage increased collaboration with border enforcement to prevent the spread of invasive mussels across the border. This involves working with local, state, and provincial governments on a regional prevention and response strategy.
- Continue to support the U.S. ACE program supporting state efforts at the prevention of aquatic invasive species.

Disaster Resilience

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- PNWER supports cross-border disaster resilience coordination and efforts to encourage further development of cross-border relationships between critical service providers and emergency management leaders to develop and share best practices and plans.
- We encourage the development of opportunities to collaborate on preparedness and response coordination for a catastrophic Cascadia subduction zone earthquake event that will impact the entire cross-border region.
- We support continued cybersecurity coordination and sharing of best practices across border states and provinces to include both the public and private sectors.
- Continue to support the Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant Program. These grant funds are focused on regional planning and encourage jurisdictions to look at large-scale disasters in a multi-jurisdictional manner.

Forestry

U.S. Department of Interior; U.S. Forest Service

- With increasingly long and intense wildfire seasons, the U.S. and Canada should work with States and Provinces and Tribal Organizations and First Nations to share best practices on wildfire suppression, reforestation and recovery after wildfires, and community adaptation and resiliency.
- The U.S. Forest Service should remain committed to Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority and engage in collaborative cross-boundary efforts.

Arctic Policy

U.S. Department of Interior; U.S. Department of Defense; U.S. Department of Commerce

- The U.S. must work with Canada and Tribal Organizations to promote greater collaboration and coordination in all sectors within the Arctic. A strong, united North American Arctic is key to ensuring continued safety and security for both countries in the Far North.
- Continue to support the modernization of the U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker program.

Mining

U.S. Department of Commerce

- Continue to collaborate with Canada on the Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Supplies. Securing Critical Minerals in Canada and the U.S. is an issue that will continue to be important to the bi-national relationship.