



April 14, 2022

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

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Ramiro A. Cavazos
President & CEO

On behalf of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) and the USHCC Binational Coalition of partners, we write to express our concerns over the recent unprecedented expansion of Operation Lone Star requiring the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to conduct unnecessary inspections for every commercial vehicle at certain land ports of entry. This rule has disrupted thousands of small businesses that operate on the Texas-Mexico border and has caused a drop of commercial traffic by as much as 60 percent. Hispanic businesses on the U.S.-Mexico border depend on commercial circularity to operate, provide jobs in border communities, and produce products that are essential for all Texans alike.

The USHCC actively promotes the economic growth, development, and interests of more than five million Hispanic-owned businesses that, combined, contribute over \$800 billion to the American economy every year. We also serve as a platform for our nationwide network of over 260 local Hispanic chambers of commerce of which more than 40 are in your state of Texas.

The delays caused by the expansion of inspections at land ports of entry is now a contributor to the supply chain crisis that we are seeing nationwide. This measure is hurting Texans and all of those whose business depends on the trade along the border with Mexico. Ports of entry along the border, from Brownsville to El Paso, have already experienced significant delays in border crossing times that have substantially increased from minutes to several hours. These inspections have reportedly caused 10-to-20-hour delays and effectively halted traffic at land ports of entry such as the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge, the number one conduit for fresh produce imports to the United States. El Paso's Ysleta-Zaragoza International Bridge ranks third in cargo crossings making it a major player in the movement of people and goods across our southern border. More than \$80.4 billion in trade moved through this regional system in 2021 alone, of which 87 percent is transported by commercial trucks. These delays will lead to a grave loss of produce, worsen our supply chain challenges, and increase costs for consumers locally and nationally. Furthermore, it will cause a substantial negative impact to Texas jobs, numerous local and state economies, along with large sums of lost revenue at our land ports of entry in border communities.

Trade with Mexico is one of the most important economic drivers for Texas, more than \$650 billion in economic activity in 2021. That is why any type of obstacle to trade will result harmful for the state and the lives of the people in it. Traffic congestion at land ports of entry result in delays that have cost the state more than \$32 billion in only the last three years. The ever-growing trade relationship with our neighbors must be met with efficiency in order to foster its growth. An international border that is more efficient but also safer is beneficial to Texas' competitiveness and enhances the state's overall economic vitality.

We share your concerns on criminal activity along our border. In our 2022 USHCC Policy Platform, we recognize border security as an essential part of trade circularity. However, we believe that there are more effective security measures that can be taken with the use of modern technology. We should invest in better technology along our southern border that aims to modernize land ports of entry, expedite trade, and help federal agents identify the real threats to our national security.



We welcome dialogue and collaborative efforts to help find an immediate solution to this issue which is causing major disruptions to multiple industries and generating additional burdens on our supply chain to Texas businesses. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to C. LeRoy Cavazos-Reyna, Vice President of Government and International Affairs via phone at 956-844-9628 or email at LCavazos@ushcc.com. We look forward to a positive outcome on this important matter related to our binational economy.

Respectfully,

Ramiro A. Cavazos
President & CEO
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Cynthia M. Sakulenzki
President & CEO
Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Gina Aguirre Adams
President & CEO
Brazoria Co. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Andrew P. Carey
Executive Director
U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership

Marina González
President & CEO
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Laura Murillo
President & CEO
Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

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San Antonio-Mexico Friendship Council

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Texas Association of Mexican
American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC)

C. LeRoy Cavazos-Reyna
VP of Government and International Affairs, USHCC
Vice-Chairman, Texas Border Coalition

CC: The Honorable John B. Scott, Secretary of State, Texas
Texas Trade Advisory Committee Members
Texas Congressional Delegation Members
Mexican-American Legislative Caucus Members