

January 11, 2024

**TO: Mr. Jaime Chamberlain, Chairman**

FROM: Luis E. Ramirez Thomas, President, Ramirez Advisors Inter-National

SUBJECT: Monthly Report of Activities – December 2023

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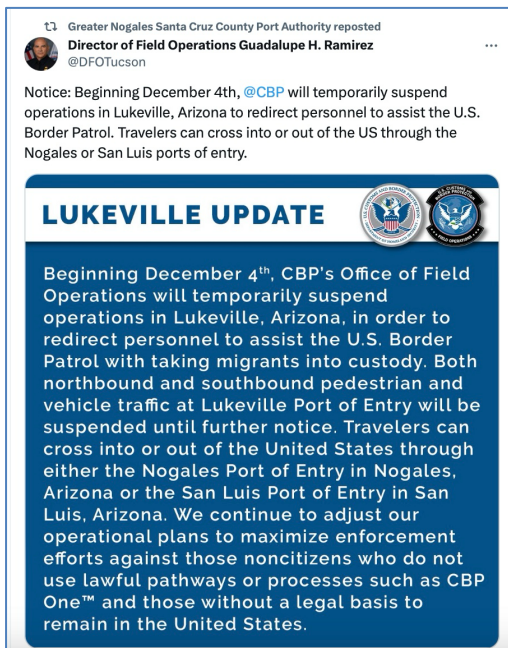
On behalf of Ramirez Advisors Inter-National, LLC (“RAI-N”) we are pleased to present our monthly activity report to you and the Board of Directors of the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority (“GNSCCPA”). As always, we request and welcome your continued comments and suggestions as to how we can improve on our services, our communications, and our activities on your behalf. With your feedback, we will make every effort to improve our response to your directives and ensure an effective implementation of the initiatives at hand.

Our recent activities on behalf of the GNSCCPA have focused on the following key areas:

1. Closure of the Lukeville POE and other US-MX Border Crossings
2. Arizona Border Congressional Briefing
3. ADOT-ECD Meets with Local Stakeholders
4. Congressional Approval of NDAA Resolves IOI Ownership Issues
5. Arizona Trade Numbers through October 2023 – December 14
6. Border Crossing Data through October 2023 – December 14
7. Transportation Board Awards \$3.25 million SMART Grant to Santa Cruz County

This report is not intended to be a full description of all activities but rather, provides highlights and information on the direction of our activities to keep the Board of Directors informed and to ensure adherence to the vision and guidance imparted to RAI-N by the GNSCCPA and its leadership. Throughout this period, RAI-N has maintained active and frequent communications with Mr. Josh Rubin, Mr. Guillermo Valencia, Mr. Bruce Bracker and other members of the Board of Directors and stakeholders to ensure that we have a fully coordinated approach to our efforts. RAI-N stands ready to address any issue, concern or suggestion that may arise from this report and from our ongoing dialogue with the leadership and the Board of Directors.

## 1. CLOSURE OF LUKEVILLE PORT OF ENTRY



- On December 1, 2023, the US government announced that it would close the port of entry at Lukeville effective December 4<sup>th</sup> for an indefinite period of time, as part of the response to the overwhelming number of migrants crossing in the area seeking asylum. In addition to Lukeville, the Ped West at San Ysidro and rail operations at Eagle Pass Texas.

- According to the statement released by Customs and Border Protection on December 1: *“Beginning on Monday, December 4, CBP’s Office of Field Operations will temporarily suspend operations in Lukeville, Arizona, in order to redirect personnel to assist the U.S. Border Patrol with taking migrants into custody. Both*

*northbound and southbound pedestrian and vehicle traffic at Lukeville Port of Entry will be suspended until further notice.”* The complete release can be found at:

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/statement-cbp-operations-lukeville-az>.

- Additionally, Governor Katie Hobbs, along with Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly, issued a strong statement against this move and urging the administration to allocate the necessary resources to address the situation properly.
- A complete copy of the statement is provided in Attachment #1
- While this action did not directly impact the ports of entry at Nogales, it is part of the continuing draw of customs personnel away from the ports of entry to support Border Patrol operations.
- The response against this action was unanimous border wide, that the indefinite closing of a port of entry was a direct affront to trade, commerce, and tourism and that it ignored the impacts of this action to Sonora, particularly to Puerto Peñasco.
- Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly, along with Governor Katie Hobbs called on the administration to reopen the port and that the necessary resources needed to be provided to enforcement authorities and the border communities that were dealing with the migrant crisis.
- Port Authority leadership was an integral part of the dialogue between local border communities and industry with authorities and our congressional delegation over the impact of this decision.

**2. ARIZONA BORDER CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING**



- On December 5, 2023, the Port Authority joined the Ports Authorities from Douglas and Yuma/San Luis, along with various other city and county government officials and regional organizations to provide a briefing on border issues for the Arizona Congressional Delegation.

- The meeting was programmed for 90 minutes, and it continued for over 4 hours given the extensive discussion on a variety of border related issues, particularly focused on the diversion of customs officers from away from the ports of entry to provide support for Border Patrol operations.

- In addition to the representatives from the offices of Senators Sinema and Kelly, and the House of Representatives offices of Congressmen Grijalva, Ciscomani, Gallego, Gosar, Schweikert, Stanton, and Biggs, we also had Arizona State Representative Alma Sandoval and



the Southern Arizona office for Governor Katie Hobbs that participated virtually.

- Special thanks to the General Services Administration, Customs and Border Protection and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality for participating and providing updates on a myriad of border projects.
- A copy of the agenda and the notes from the meeting are provided in Attachment #2.
- In addition to the briefing, the entities present signed a Joint Resolution that focused on the continuity of operations at ports of entry and the need to ensure that ports are adequately staffed.
- The Joint Resolution provided 6 specific recommendations:
  - FIRST: Update the workforce model that determines the appropriate staffing levels to

reflect the changes to mission requirements and conditions at each port of entry.

- SECOND: Implement a pilot program that allows the Field Offices and Port Directors to recruit local talent to fill support and clerical positions without having to rely on the USAJOBS.gov national system.
  - THIRD: Conduct an analysis and implement recommendations to streamline the recruitment and hiring process for CBP personnel.
  - FOURTH: Eliminate the deployment of CBP personnel to support Border Patrol operations unless the federal government declares a national emergency.
  - FIFTH: Renew the incentive program that provides financial and educational incentives for officers that select to be assigned to Arizona's ports of entry.
  - SIXTH: Support for the Border Enforcement, Security and Trade Facilitation (BEST) Act that seeks to provide the necessary resources for US Customs and Border Protection to properly monitor technology deployed at the ports of entry.
- Important to note that the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry also signed on to the Joint Resolution.
  - A copy of the Joint Resolution is provided in Attachment #3.
  - Special thanks to:
    - Unisource Energy for hosting the meeting at their headquarters in Tucson!
    - Consul General of the United States Michelle Ward for making the trip to participate in the dialogue.





### 3. ADOT-ECD MEETS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS



- On December 14, and as part of the ongoing dialogue with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), a large contingent of the ADOT leadership, particularly the Enforcement and Compliance Division (ECD), held a meeting with local stakeholders to discuss a variety of transportation related issues.

- Representing the local community were:

- Chairman Chamberlain
- The Honorable Jorge Maldonado, Mayor
- Roy Bermudez, City Manager
- US Consul General in Nogales, Sonora, Michelle Ward
- Mexican Consul General in Nogales, Arizona, Marcos Moreno Baez
- Guillermo Valencia, Board Member
- Allison Moore, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
- Georgina Felix, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

- Additionally, ADOT provided an update on activities relating to the Border Liaison Unit (BLU).



#### 4. CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF NDAA RESOLVES IOI OWNERSHIP ISSUES



- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, Congress approved the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
- The Act authorizes fiscal year appropriations principally for the Department of Defense, Department of Energy national security programs, Department of State, and the Intelligence Community the Phoenix Business Journal printed an OpEd by Chairman Chamberlain.
- Thanks to the efforts of Senator Sinema in the Senate and Congressman Raul Grijalva in the House, the NDAA included the provisions necessary to transfer the ownership of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) to the federal government.
- It is now the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) that will have complete responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the IOI.
- Additionally, the NDAA included the provisions to deploy the scree to stop the flow of illegal drugs through the IOI, minimizing the risk of future damage to the IOI from drug bundles flowing through the pipeline.
- A press release issued by the Senator included quotes from key local leaders, including Chairman Chamberlain:
  - “Thank you, Senator Sinema, for your leadership in pushing forward a solution that transfers the ownership and responsibility for the maintenance and operations of the Nogales IOI to the federal government. For decades, we have sought relief from the ongoing threat of breach of the IOI and untreated wastewater impacting our watershed. The Nogales Wastewater Improvement Act is essential to the welfare of our community,” stated Jaime Chamberlain, Chairman of the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority.
- Congratulations to the Port Authority and the City of Nogales on this major win for the environment and the quality of life of the residents of the region!
- A copy of the press release from the Senator is provided below:

### SIGNED INTO LAW: SINEMA’S BIPARTISAN NOGALES WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENT ACT

Dec 22, 2023

*Sinema’s bill – now law – addresses key national security and public health challenges  
for the City of Nogales and all of Arizona*

**WASHINGTON** – Arizona senior Senator Kyrsten Sinema’s historic *Nogales Wastewater Improvement Act* was today signed into law as part of the annual bipartisan defense legislation.

Sinema's law delivers an agreement that has been decades in the making to authorize the transfer of the ownership of the International Outfall Interceptor (IOI) to the U.S., achieving a commonsense compromise that elected officials from both parties and all levels of government have sought to strike for decades.

**"Nogales has been waiting for decades for a solution to the international outfall interceptor – and I'm proud to deliver this agreement critical to strengthening Arizona's border and our national security,"** said Sinema.

**"Your support and dedication to the City of Nogales Arizona is greatly appreciated, from the moment that you knew that the City needed this corrected. It became a priority to get this done. As Mayor of the City and on behalf of all our community and staff. We thank you for your help and accomplishment in this matter,"** said Jorge Maldonado, Mayor of the City of Nogales.

**"We are grateful for Senator Sinema's leadership and advocacy on behalf of our community on this critical issue. This has been a multiyear endeavor, and I am grateful for the sustained effort from the Senator. Having the federal government assume the responsibility of its operation and maintenance of the Nogales IOI is a tremendous step forward in addressing the longstanding challenges of this pipeline,"** said Supervisor Bruce Bracker of Santa Cruz County.

**"Thank you, Senator Sinema, for your leadership in pushing forward a solution that transfers the ownership and responsibility for the maintenance and operations of the Nogales IOI to the federal government. For decades, we have sought relief from the ongoing threat of breach of the IOI and untreated wastewater impacting our watershed. The Nogales Wastewater Improvement Act is essential to the welfare of our community,"** stated Jaime Chamberlain, Chairman of the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority.

**"I appreciate Senator Sinema's leadership and advocacy in addressing longstanding issues with the International Outfall Inceptor (IOI) and to secure critical funding. Transferring ownership of the IOI and authorizing appropriations for critical construction and operation and maintenance activities will protect the health and well-being of people living in our border communities, and ensure critical protections for our precious water resources and environment,"** said Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Cabinet Executive Officer Karen Peters.

The *Nogales Wastewater Improvement Act* was introduced by Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and cosponsored by Representative Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.) in the U.S. House. Senator Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) cosponsored Sinema's bill in the Senate. For years, the City of Nogales has [continually tried to seek federal funds and additional ownership responsibility](#) from the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for [necessary infrastructure improvements](#) on an international

sewage pipe that flows from Mexico through Nogales, Arizona to the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Facility in Rio Rico, Arizona.

Families in Nogales have faced challenges with untreated wastewater coming from Mexico and overflowing into streets during storm events. Sinema's legislation will streamline the ability for the government to respond to crises on the US-side of the border and authorizes full funding for operations and maintenance into the future.

Additionally, drug smugglers in Mexico use the IOI to send narcotics and other illicit goods through the pipeline from the Mexico side of the border to be retrieved on the U.S. side. This pipeline is being used as a tunnel for illicit trafficking – directly below the Customs and Border Protection DeConcini Port of Entry. Sinema's bill authorizes the construction of a drug screen at the border to catch the illicit materials cartels send into Arizona communities before they can be retrieved.

Nearly half of all the fentanyl seized by CBP and DEA in the entire United States is seized in Arizona. Sinema's bill better prevents these drugs from entering the country. Transferring the ownership of the pipeline, and authorizing the construction of a critical drug screen at the border, would rectify what amounts to an immediate risk to the local community, but also address nationwide security concerns as Sinema focuses on combating cartel trafficking.

The legislation also requires the federal government to initiate discussions with Mexico to ensure Mexico uses and pays for its fair share of the IOI.


## 5. ARIZONA TRADE NUMBERS THROUGH OCTOBER 2023

- On December 14, the US Census Bureau released trade data through October 2023, that includes Arizona's trade with its USMCA partners, Mexico and Canada.
- Here are some general observations on the trade data:
  - Overall, Arizona's trade relationship with USMCA partners continues to trend upwards. We are on track to break another record for both countries should the trends continue for the remainder of the year.
  - During the period from January to October 2023.
  - **Arizona's two-way trade with Mexico and Canada reached \$21.3 billion**, an increase of 3.5% compared to the same period in 2022.
  - **Arizona's two-way trade with Mexico reached \$16.8 billion**, an increase of 3.1% compared to the same period in 2022.
    - While Arizona's exports to Mexico are down 6.1%, it does not appear to be the result of a systemic trend that merits concern. Mexico issued a federal decree this past October that limits the import of petroleum and related products ([Reuters](#)). And



in this commodity category, Arizona’s exports are down 85.3% or \$562 million less during this period.

- **Arizona’s two-way trade with Canada reached \$4.5 billion**, an increase of 4.9% compared to the same period in 2022.



### Arizona Trade with Mexico and Canada

January-October 2022 vs January-October 2023

#### Arizona Trade with Mexico

	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Difference	% Change
Exports to Mexico	\$ 7,234,018,451	\$ 6,795,234,386	↓ \$ (438,784,065)	↓ -6.1%
Imports from Mexico	\$ 9,015,880,867	\$ 9,961,444,629	↑ \$ 945,563,762	↑ 10.5%
<b>Total Trade with Mexico</b>	<b>\$ 16,249,899,318</b>	<b>\$ 16,756,679,015</b>	<b>↑ \$ 506,779,697</b>	<b>↑ 3.1%</b>

#### Arizona Trade with Canada

	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Difference	% Change
Exports to Canada	\$ 2,144,150,982	\$ 2,332,004,149	↑ \$ 187,853,167	↑ 8.8%
Imports from Canada	\$ 2,162,519,034	\$ 2,184,021,360	↑ \$ 21,502,326	↑ 1.0%
<b>Total Trade with Canada</b>	<b>\$ 4,306,670,016</b>	<b>\$ 4,516,025,509</b>	<b>↑ \$ 209,355,493</b>	<b>↑ 4.9%</b>

#### Arizona Trade with Mexico and Canada

	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Difference	% Change
Exports to Mex. & Can.	\$ 9,378,169,433	\$ 9,127,238,535	↓ \$ (250,930,898)	↓ -2.7%
Imports from Mex. & Can.	\$ 11,178,399,901	\$ 12,145,465,989	↑ \$ 967,066,088	↑ 8.7%
<b>Total Trade with Mex. &amp; Can.</b>	<b>\$ 20,556,569,334</b>	<b>\$ 21,272,704,524</b>	<b>↑ \$ 716,135,190</b>	<b>↑ 3.5%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau. Values presented in \$USD.  
 Data subject to change without notice.  
 Updated 12/06/2023

## 6. BORDER CROSSING DATA THROUGH OCTOBER 2023

- On December 14<sup>th</sup> the US Department of Transportation released the border crossing data through October of 2023.
- The data indicates another growth year for cross-border traffic at Nogales (northbound traffic)
  - Trucks are up: 3.7% to 320,143 trucks.
  - Cars are up: 1.1% to 3.08 million cars.
  - Trains are up: 7.9% to 734 trains.
  - Pedestrians are up 16.1% to 2.4 million.
  - Total people are up: 4.6% to approximately 8.5 million people.

- Perhaps most significant is the growth in pedestrian traffic, as pedestrian traffic is a good indicator for the downtown merchants and the overall retail sector.



### Arizona Northbound Border Crossings(\*) January-October 2022 vs January-October 2023

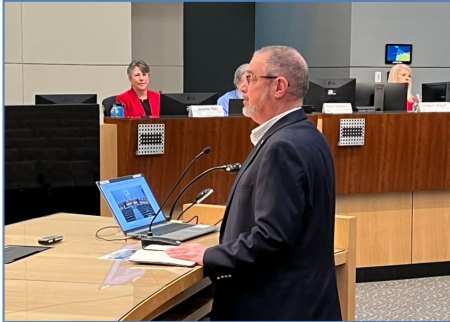
Port	Mode	Jan-Oct 2022	Jan-Oct 2023	Difference	Change
Douglas	Trucks	25,032	23,133	-1,899	-7.6%
	Personal Vehicles	1,282,055	1,328,067	46,012	3.6%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	2,291,914	2,400,924	109,010	4.8%
	Pedestrians	556,810	632,277	75,467	13.6%
	Buses	100	153	53	53.0%
	Bus Passengers (*)	987	4,147	3,160	320.2%
	Total People (*)	2,849,711	3,037,348	187,637	6.6%
Nogales	Trucks	308,811	320,143	11,332	3.7%
	Personal Vehicles	3,048,501	3,082,326	33,825	1.1%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	5,841,659	5,930,422	88,763	1.5%
	Pedestrians	2,072,685	2,405,704	333,019	16.1%
	Trains	680	734	54	7.9%
	Buses	5,768	7,330	1,562	27.1%
	Bus Passengers (*)	200,073	154,957	-45,116	-22.5%
Total People (*)	8,116,445	8,491,083	374,638	4.6%	
San Luis	Trucks	40,892	40,116	-776	-1.9%
	Personal Vehicles	2,778,957	2,745,411	-33,546	-1.2%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	4,521,460	4,540,967	19,507	0.4%
	Pedestrians	1,642,291	1,824,267	181,976	11.1%
	Buses	80	84	4	5.0%
	Bus Passengers (*)	78	84	6	7.7%
	Total People (*)	6,163,829	6,365,318	201,489	3.3%
Lukeville	Trucks	705	731	26	3.7%
	Personal Vehicles	381,307	378,045	-3,262	-0.9%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	848,271	852,596	4,325	0.5%
	Pedestrians	56,837	62,887	6,050	10.6%
	Buses	490	499	9	1.8%
	Bus Passengers (*)	2,644	2,720	76	2.9%
	Total People (*)	907,752	918,203	10,451	1.2%
Naco	Trucks	2,455	2,502	47	1.9%
	Personal Vehicles	256,472	272,196	15,724	6.1%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	462,143	502,254	40,111	8.7%
	Pedestrians	73,640	69,247	-4,393	-6.0%
	Total People	535,783	571,501	35,718	6.7%
Sasabe	Personal Vehicles	22,300	23,021	721	3.2%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	42,422	43,682	1,260	3.0%
	Pedestrians	723	389	-334	-46.2%
	Total People	43,145	44,071	926	2.1%
State Totals	Trucks	377,895	386,625	8,730	2.3%
	Personal Vehicles	7,769,592	7,829,066	59,474	0.8%
	Personal Vehicle Passengers	14,007,869	14,270,845	262,976	1.9%
	Pedestrians	4,402,986	4,994,771	591,785	13.4%
	Buses	6,438	8,066	1,628	25.3%
	Bus Passengers(*)	203,782	161,908	-41,874	-20.5%
	Total People(*)	18,616,665	19,427,524	810,859	4.4%

SOURCE: US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics. All data provided herein subject to change without prior notice.

(\*) NOTE: Total People is comprised of the number of passengers for buses, cars, trains, and pedestrians.  
 Ramirez Advisors does not have the ability to verify the accuracy of the data published by USDOT.  
 We have observed some unexplained variances that we believe impact our analysis of the data trends.

Updated 12/1/2023

## 7. TRANSPORTATION BOARD AWARDS \$3.25 MILLION SMART GRANT TO SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



- On December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Arizona Transportation Board, during their meeting in Yuma, unanimously approved Santa Cruz County's Arizona State Match Advantage for Rural Transportation (SMART) program.
- The \$3.25 million grant award will be used to pay for the design of the modernization of the I-19 interchanges at Ruby Road and Rio Rico, along with the east frontage road.
- The county will be providing a \$500,000 match, using part of the funds appropriated by the legislature last year to help pay for the project.
- The design phase is estimated to cost \$3.725 million.
- Thanks to ADOT for the technical assistance in determining the cost of the design phase.
- This project is an integral part of the

- transportation network that supports trade through the Mariposa port of entry, and it also serves the fastest growing parts of the county.
- Special thanks to Supervisor Bruce Bracker and County Administrator Jesus Valdes for making the trip to Yuma. Supervisor Bracker testified in person during the Call to the Public portion of the meeting.
  - Congratulations to the Port Authority and the County as this is yet another significant win for the community!

**Attachment #1**

Lukeville Statement by Arizona Governor and Senators

## **Sinema, Kelly, Hobbs Statement on Lukeville POE Closure News Release**

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**December 1, 2023**

**ARIZONA** – Arizona Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly along with Governor Katie Hobbs issued the following statement on the Lukeville Port of Entry closure due to the border crisis.

“Arizona border communities are in crisis and our men and women on the front lines do not have the resources they need to manage the overwhelming numbers of migrants crossing the border. With over 2,000 migrants coming across the Tucson sector daily, CBP has announced they will temporarily close the Lukeville, Arizona Port of Entry and redirect all officers – who would otherwise manage the everyday travel of workers and tourists that businesses rely on and trade that drives our economy forward – to instead help U.S. Border Patrol process migrants.

"This is an unacceptable outcome that further destabilizes our border, risks the safety of our communities, and damages our economy by disrupting trade and tourism. The Federal Government must act swiftly to maintain port of entry operations, get the border under control, keep Arizona communities safe, and ensure the humane treatment of migrants.

"Our offices are in constant contact with CBP leadership, Border Patrol Agents and CBP Officers, Mexican officials, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, and leadership at DHS as we monitor the situation. Enough is enough - Arizona deserves real solutions to our border crisis. The Administration must send immediate resources to secure the border and help our communities. Partisan politicians who parrot talking points while watching the border further deteriorate must reject the echo chamber and work with us to get something done and keep our communities safe.”

**Attachment #2**  
**Congressional Border Briefing Agenda**



**AGENDA**

**Arizona Border Congressional Briefing**

Tucson Electric Power  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
88 E Broadway Boulevard  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Join with Zoom:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82617591634?pwd=c01nbmxsU3NEY3JGRUdJSmt6cENjUT09>  
Meeting ID: 826 1759 1634  
Passcode: 045466

Tuesday, December 5, 2023  
11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

- I. **Welcome & Introductions (10 min)**
  - a. *Moderator:* Luis Ramirez, Ramirez Advisors Inter-National (3 min)
  - b. Teresa Bravo, Tucson Electric Power (2 min)
  - c. Participant Introductions (5 min)
  
- II. **Port of Entry Project Updates (30 min)**

Presentations by:

  - a. Douglas
  - b. Nogales
  - c. San Luis

Commentary by:

  - a. Anthony Kleppe, General Services Administration – Region 9
  - b. Mark Jankowski, CBP Office of Field Operations – Tucson
  - c. Michelle Ward, U.S. Consulate General in Nogales, Sonora

Congressional Offices Q&A
  
- III. **Reassignment of CBP Officers (20 min)**

Commentary by:

  - a. Mark Jankowski, CBP Office of Field Operations – Tucson
  - b. Douglas
  - c. Nogales
  - d. San Luis

Congressional Offices Q&A



**IV. CBP Recruitment & Staffing (30 min)**

Commentary by:

- a. Mark Jankowski, CBP Office of Field Operations – Tucson
- b. Douglas
- c. Nogales
- d. San Luis

Congressional Offices Q&A

**V. Border Environmental Update (5 min)**

- a. Joaquin Marruffo, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

**VI. Tomato Suspension Agreement (5 min)**

- a. Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

**VII. Legislative Updates (30 min)**

- a. FY2024 Appropriations and Congressionally Directed Spending Requests
- b. Border Enforcement, Security, and Trade (BEST) Facilitation Act (H.R. 5990/S.2278)
- c. Legislation allowing CBP to carry routine maintenance at ports of entry (S.243)
- d. Securing America’s Ports of Entry Act of 2023 (S.2153)

**VIII. Open Discussion**

Moderator will call on each border community and congressional office to provide an opportunity for any additional commentary and/or update.

**IX. Concluding Remarks & Action Items**

**X. Signing of the Joint Resolution on CBP Staffing**

## Copy of Minutes from Congressional Border Briefing



### NOTES

Arizona Border Congressional Briefing  
Tuesday, December 5, 2023  
Tucson, AZ

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#### Summary

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Arizona's border communities held the second Border Congressional Briefing of the year in Tucson, AZ for a timely discussion with congressional staff with a particular focus on regional infrastructure projects and issues impacting the continuity of operations at the land ports of entry. The meeting offered the opportunity for border leaders to engage with Congressional offices on several issues that impact the border, including issues and projects impacting transportation, environment, economic development and confronting the recent challenges at the border from the growing migrant crisis. Leadership from the communities of San Luis, Nogales, and Douglas presented on their respective projects:

- **San Luis 1:** The construction phase of the modernization of the San Luis 1 port of entry, which broke ground earlier this year, continues to move forward. City leadership and regional stakeholders continue to push for the Mexican federal government to confirm project funding and timeline for the proposed improvements for the San Luis Rio Colorado 1 port of entry, which includes technical coordination with the U.S. side on the future southbound alignment.
- **Douglas Two-Port Solution:** The city of Douglas and Cochise County continue to work with regional partners and the General Services Administration to identify and secure funding, plan, and carry out the necessary utility expansion projects that are needed during the construction phase for the new commercial port and support operations thereafter. City leadership, in coordination with their local counterparts in Agua Prieta, continue to advocate for the Mexican federal government to share their proposals, project timeline and funding to mirror the work that is being done on the U.S. side.
- **Nogales:** The General Services Administration selected the contractor that will be conduct the Feasibility Study to modernize the DeConcini port of entry – a study that will take 12-months to complete. The Nogales community continues to ask that there be increased community and coordination between the U.S. and Mexican federal governments on port of entry-related issues, particularly on projects that stand to interfere with the flow of traffic. This was need was highlighted by the unexpected closure of the Morley Gate at Nogales so that the Mexican military could tear down the old facilities and build a new facility, but only provided a few days of advance notice by posting a banner outside of the port facility on the Mexican side.

In a meeting that went over by over 2-hours past the scheduled time, participants engaged in extensive dialogue on the issues affecting the continuity of operations at the ports of entry on the U.S.-Mexico border. Among the issues that were raised include:



- Identifying potential solutions for the reopening of the Lukeville port of entry.
- Addressing short- and long-term staffing needs for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.
- Binational coordination with the State of Sonora and Mexican federal government to properly manage migration flows and keep the ports of entry operational.
- Extending the availability of funding from FEMA's Shelter and Services Program (SSP) for border communities, especially Pima County which is providing significant support to Douglas and Nogales for the transportation of migrants to Tucson.

In a demonstration of the unity and collaboration among border communities and regional stakeholder that confront similar issues, several border stakeholders signed a joint resolution which outline a series of policy solutions to address the short- and long-term staffing needs at the ports. A copy of the Joint Resolution can be found below.





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**Participants**

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***Congressional Offices:***

Office of Senator Kyrsten Sinema

- Bianca Lopez, Border and Immigration Affairs Director
- Troy Kimball, Southern Arizona Director

Office of Senator Mark Kelly

- Luis Heredia, State Director Office of Senator Mark Kelly
- Karla Avalos, Southern Arizona Director
- Robert Guerrero, Southern Arizona Outreach & Constituent Services Representative

Office of Congressman Eli Crane (AZ-02)

- Gaither Martin, District Director

Office of Congressman Ruben Gallego (AZ-03)

- Celeste Longoria, Deputy Director of Constituent Services
- Genesis Yin Vargas, Outreach Advisor

Office of Congressman Greg Stanton (AZ-04)

- Mia Rubio, Legislative Assistant

Office of Congressman Andy Biggs (AZ-05)

- David Romney, District Director

Office of Congressman Juan Ciscomani

- C.J. Karamargin, District Director
- Caroline Bender, Legislative Director

Office of Congressman Raul M. Grijalva (AZ-07)

- Ruben Reyes, District Director

Office of Congressman Paul Gosar (AZ-09)

- Jeremiah Cota, Office of Congressman Paul Gosar

***Border Communities:***

San Luis/Yuma County

- The Hon. Nieves Riedel, Mayor, City of San Luis
- The Hon. Matias Rosales, Councilmember, City of San Luis; Chairman, Greater Yuma Port Authority
- Jenny Torres, Acting City Manager, City of San Luis
- Alejandro Figueroa, Economic Development and Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Yuma County
- Buna George, Executive Director, Greater Yuma Port Authority

Nogales/Santa Cruz County

- The Hon. Bruce Bracker, Supervisor, Santa Cruz County



- The Hon. Jorge Maldonado, Mayor, City of Nogales
- Jaime Chamberlain, Chairman, Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority
- Jesus Valdez, Manager, Santa Cruz County
- Guillermo Valencia, Board Member, Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority
- Joshua Rubin, Vice Chair, Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority

Douglas/Cochise County

- The Hon. Donald Huish, Mayor, City of Douglas
- Ana Urquijo, City Manager, City of Douglas
- Luis Pedroza, Deputy City Manager, City of Douglas

**Stakeholder Partners:**

- The Hon. Mariana Sandoval, Arizona House of Representatives
- The Hon. Michelle Ward, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General in Nogales, Sonora
- Joaquin Marruffo, Border Affairs Unit Manager, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Mari Valdez, Political/Economic Affairs Associate, U.S. Consulate General in Nogales, Sonora
- Mark Jankowski, U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Tucson Office of Field Operations
- Nathalia Untiveros, Southern Arizona Office Deputy Director, Office of the Governor, State of Arizona
- Anthony Kleppe, LPOE Portfolio Manager, General Services Administration – Region 9
- Ted Maxwell, President/CEO, Southern Arizona Leadership Council
- Teresa Bravo, Government Affairs Representative, Tucson Electric Power
- Luis Ramirez, President, Ramirez Advisors Inter-National
- Martin Rodriguez Nuñez, Advisor, Ramirez Advisors Inter-National

**Attachment #3**  
Copy of Joint Resolution

**JOINT RESOLUTION BY ARIZONA BORDER STAKEHOLDERS ON  
PORT OF ENTRY OPERATIONAL AND STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS**

TUCSON, ARIZONA  
DECEMBER 5, 2023

**WHEREAS**, border communities are our nation’s principal gateways for trade and tourism with Mexico; and

**WHEREAS**, the border communities and their residents must live with the consequences of decisions made in Washington, D.C., and Mexico City;

**WHEREAS**, the pandemic demonstrated that continuity of operations at the ports of entry is an essential aspect of efforts to protect the Homeland;

**WHEREAS**, diverting Customs and Border Protection personnel away from ports of entry to support Border Patrol Operations has severely impacted the processing capacity for trade and tourism at the ports of entry;

**WHEREAS**, the border communities are on the frontline of the efforts to secure the Homeland;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Arizona’s border communities jointly put forward the following recommendations designed to make the ports of entry more effective and efficient in meeting the mission of federal law enforcement while facilitating trade, tourism, and investment.

**FIRST:** Update the workforce model that determines the appropriate staffing levels to reflect the changes to mission requirements and conditions at each port of entry.

**SECOND:** Implement a pilot program that allows the Field Offices and Port Directors to recruit local talent to fill support and clerical positions without having to rely on the USAJOBS.gov national system.

**THIRD:** Conduct an analysis and implement recommendations to streamline the recruitment and hiring process for CBP personnel.

**FOURTH:** Eliminate the deployment of CBP personnel to support Border Patrol operations unless the federal government declares a national emergency.

**FIFTH:** Renew the incentive program that provides financial and educational incentives for officers that select to be assigned to Arizona’s ports of entry.

**SIXTH:** Support for the Border Enforcement, Security and Trade Facilitation (BEST) Act that seeks to provide the necessary resources for US Customs and Border Protection to properly monitor technology deployed at the ports of entry.



The Honorable Donald Huish, Mayor  
City of Douglas



The Honorable Jorge Maldonado, Mayor  
City of Nogales



The Honorable Nieves Riedel, Mayor  
City of San Luis



The Honorable Bruce Bracker, Supervisor  
Santa Cruz County



Jaime Chamberlain, Chairman  
Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port  
Authority



Matias Rosales, Chairman  
Greater Yuma Port Authority




Carlos Fernandez, Chairman  
Douglas International Port Authority



Ted Maxwell, President and CEO  
Southern Arizona Leadership Council



The Honorable Ann English, Supervisor  
Cochise County



Daniel Seiden, President and CEO  
Arizona Chamber of Commerce and  
Industry