

September 21, 2022

Pete Flores
Executive Assistant Commissioner
Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Executive Assistant Commissioner Flores:

On behalf of the undersigned business organizations and regional stakeholders, and speaking for a variety of industries and small, medium, and large employers in our region, we write to urge you to take the lead in the implementation of a pilot program expanding travel opportunities of Mexican citizens into a broader area within Southern California.

Expanding the existing travel zone of 25 miles into the U.S. from the U.S.-Mexico border would facilitate and increase cross-border travel between Mexico and California for Mexican citizens traveling into the U.S. without the additional process of an I-94 permit and related fee. This initiative removes regulatory barriers that currently prevent and discourage visa holders from visiting popular tourist destinations in our state and frees up valuable time and resources for CBP officers to focus on the agency's critical missions such as the efficient flow of commercial trade and crime prevention. Phase one of this pilot program could consist in the expansion of the existing travel zone to include Orange County, Los Angeles County, Riverside County, and Imperial County. A second phase could explore the possibility of eliminating the I-94 altogether.

As the U.S. and global economies continue to recover and international trade and travel rapidly reached pre-pandemic levels, we are increasingly concerned that CBP staffing is not sufficient to address our increased traveler and trade volumes.

We hope this proposed pilot program is yet another success in our cross-border community.

Sincerely,



Jerry Sanders
President and CEO
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce



Alejandra Mier y Terán
Executive Director
Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce



Jason Wells
Executive Director
San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce



Gustavo de la Fuente
Executive Director
Smart Border Coalition

Cc: CBP Commissioner Christopher Magnus
DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas