



A New Border Vision

“I just returned from Guadalajara, Mexico, where President Obama and I met with our Mexican counterparts to continue our collaboration and cooperation on a range of border issues...it's clear to me that as our shared border challenges evolve, our approach must evolve as well. That is exactly what we are doing.”

*Janet Napolitano
Secretary
Department of
Homeland Security*

Mexico and the United States have a shared interest in creating a 21st century border that promotes the security and prosperity of both countries. The U.S. and Mexican governments have launched a range of initiatives that challenge the traditional view of “hold the line” and are developing a framework for a new vision of 21st century border management.

The new framework is based on the principles of joint border management, co-responsibility for cross-border crime, and shared commitment to the efficient flow of legal commerce and travel.

- **Enhancing Public Safety** – The protection of Mexican and U.S. citizens from the criminal organizations responsible for the traffic in people, drugs, arms, and money across our common land border is a key priority for both countries. In addition to the bilateral Merida Initiative programs currently underway, we must develop joint strategies for key smuggling and trafficking corridors along with regular sharing of information on investigations, prosecutions, and screening practices.
- **Securing Flows** – The central challenge in managing flows of people and goods is to separate high-risk travelers and cargo from low-risk ones. Tools that help prevent illegitimate trade and travel while expediting legitimate trade and travel include implementing complementary risk management strategies in both countries, establishing a bi-national “model port” to share information on goods and people, and improving trusted traveler and shipper programs. We must work together with the private sector to ensure that we achieve these goals.
- **Expediting Legitimate Commerce and Travel** – Each day, about a billion dollars of commerce and a million people cross the U.S.-Mexico border. Affirmative steps that accelerate the flow of people and goods through ports of entry enhance both countries' economic competitiveness. Both countries need work with the private sector to encourage investment in the people, technology, and infrastructure that comprise a 21st century border. Secure transit lanes for pre-cleared rail and truck shipments as well as passenger pre-clearance programs are two tools that could make cross border trade and travel more efficient.
- **Engaging Border Communities** – Mexico is the number one or number two export destination of twenty-two U.S. states. Cross-border trade contributes enormously to the economic vitality of both countries, especially in the border region. Continuing to engage border communities, as well as state, local, and tribal governments in bi-national strategy development, law enforcement, and communications, is essential to collaborative border management.
- **Setting Policy** – Achieving rapid policy change requires an agile inter-agency process within each country, as well as a means by which both governments can easily coordinate at a bi-national level. Both countries need to reinvigorate their policy-setting architecture to address the statutory and regulatory changes and the infrastructure investments needed to realize our new vision of collaborative border management.

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