

# BINATIONAL CHAMBER OF BORDER COMMERCE

## CAMARA BINACIONAL DE COMERCIO FRONTERIZO

April 6, 2009

### Member Organizations

Calixico Chamber of Commerce

Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce

Imperial Valley Economic Development Corp.

Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce

South County Economic Development Council

Tecate Community Chamber of Commerce

CANACO/SERVYTUR Ensenada

CANACO/SERVYTUR Mexicali

CANACO/SERVYTUR Playas de Rosarito

CANACO/SERVYTUR Tecate

CANACO/SERVYTUR Tijuana

Secretary Janet Napolitano  
Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Re: **US/ Mexico Land Ports of Entry – Southbound Interdiction**

Secretary Napolitano–

On behalf of the Business Community along the entire California/ Baja California border, the Binational Chamber of Border Commerce writes you to express our great concern regarding the implementation of southbound inspections at our land ports of entry.

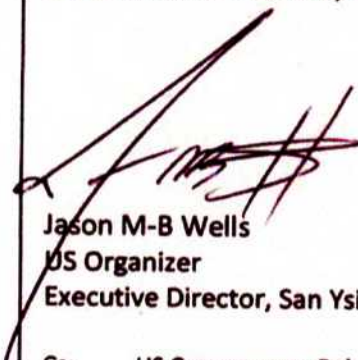
We recognize and fully support the need for ceasing the southbound flow of arms, ammunition, stolen vehicles and large quantities of cash from the US to Mexico. We further understand the US-Visit requirement of registering the use of I-94 permits. However, the method of inspection for these activities is critical to the safety, mobility and commerce of border communities on both sides of the border.

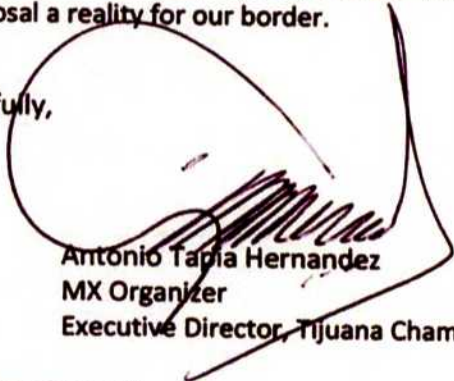
We are encouraged by your words to the *San Diego Union-Tribune* Editorial Board that, "...one of the goals [of southbound inspections] is to mitigate line waits" through the use of technology. To that end, the Binational Chamber of Border Commerce herein attaches our proposal for a **coordinated, single-point inspection system that would provide advanced inspection of 100% of all vehicles entering Mexico without a significant increase to current wait times entering Mexico – and without automobiles being stopped in primary traffic.**

Secretary Napolitano, it was heartening to hear, during your recent visit to the Otay Mesa Port of Entry, that, "I have never felt better about working with the government of Mexico than I do right now, in terms of their ability and their confidence and their dedication to this mission." The Binational Chamber of Border Commerce strongly feels our attached proposal will offer the US, Mexico, and citizens and visitors of both a win-win-win situation.

We welcome any comments or concerns you may have with this proposal, and ask that you let us know how we may assist making our proposal a reality for our border.

Most Respectfully,

  
Jason M-B Wells  
US Organizer  
Executive Director, San Ysidro Chamber

  
Antonio Tapia Hernandez  
MX Organizer  
Executive Director, Tijuana Chamber

Cc: US Congressman Bob Filner (continued on next page)

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## **CAMARA BINACIONAL DE COMERCIO FRONTERIZO**

Secretary Janet Napolitano

**US/ Mexico Land Ports of  
Entry – Southbound  
Interdiction  
April 6, 2009  
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CC's continued:

US Congressman Brian Bilbray, CA  
US Congressman Henry Cuellar, TX  
US Congresswoman Susan Davis, CA  
US Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, AZ  
US Congressman Raul Grijalva, AZ  
US Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, TX  
US Congressman Duncan Hunter, CA  
US Congressman Darrell Issa, CA  
US Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz, TX  
US Congressman Silvestre Reyes, TX  
US Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, TX  
US Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, CA  
US Congressman Harry Teague, NM  
MX Congressman Antonio Valladolid  
San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders  
Tijuana Mayor Jorge Ramos  
Border Trade Alliance  
San Diego Association of Governments

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## WORKING PAPER PROPER AND EFFICIENT SOUTHBOUND INSPECTIONS

### Issue/ Facts:

- To combat the illegal flow of arms, ammunition, stolen vehicles and large sums of cash entering Mexico from the United States, the Mexican government has stated its intent for the requirement of **“all southbound passenger vehicles at the US-MX Border, and northbound passenger vehicles at its southern border, to stop at the borderline and go through an automated vehicle identification process.”**<sup>1</sup>
- The United States government has stated its intention to implement the portion of US-VISIT requiring the confirmation that holders of I-94 permits have re-entered Mexico after their approved stay in the US.
- Two separate inspections (US and Mexico) for the same crossing would render our Ports of Entry blockades, not crossings.
- The President of the United States of America has “firmly committed to ensuring our borders are secure and we are doing all we can to reduce illegal flows in both directions across the border.”<sup>2</sup>
- The US Congress has appropriated (FY08 Supp, FY09 Omnibus) \$700 million to support Mexico’s security and institution building efforts under the Merida Initiative.

### Concerns With Stated Approach:

- The complete stopping of southbound vehicles will cause critical damage to the safety, mobility and commerce of border communities on both sides of the border. In the particular case of San Ysidro, traffic on the two largest highways in the San Diego region will render the communities of San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, Nestor, Egger Highlands, Palm City and the cities of Imperial Beach, Coronado and Chula Vista critically deluged.
  - Mexico plans for all vehicles to **“stop at the borderline and go through an automated vehicle identification process.”**
- Canine teams (currently proposed<sup>3</sup>), while effective for searches of stationary vehicles, would be woefully ineffective in traffic lanes where 37,000 vehicles pass per day.<sup>4</sup>
- The criminal elements rightfully targeted by these measures will certainly overcome any detection weighing vehicles could offer. An empty gas tank, the removal of a spare tire or the concealment of contraband within everyday cargo, could certainly defeat the proposed weight-based detection method.

<sup>1</sup> Aduana Mexico, March 2009 AFORO Presentation

<sup>2</sup> The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, March 24,2009 “WH Announce U.S.-Mexico Border Security Policy

<sup>3</sup> San Diego Union-Tribune, April 2, 2009, “Border Upgrades Announced”

<sup>4</sup> US Customs and Border Protection, 30-day average of POV crossings at San Ysidro, CA

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## CAMARA BINACIONAL DE COMERCIO FRONTERIZO

WORKING PAPER  
PROPER AND EFFICIENT  
SOUTHBOUND INSPECTIONS

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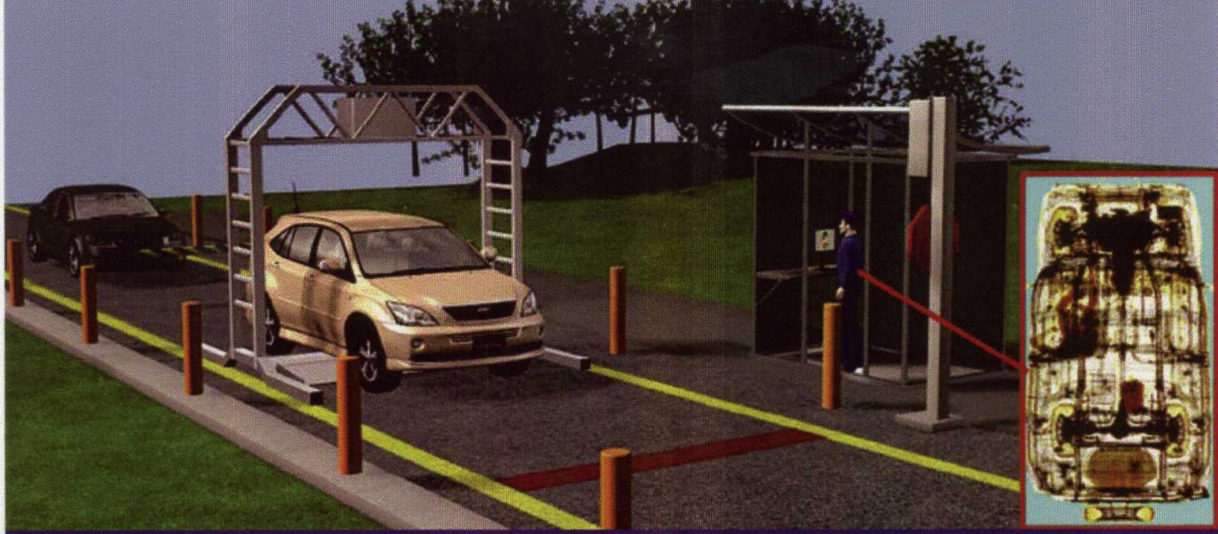
### PROPOSED SOLUTION:

The Binational Chamber of Border Commerce supports a coordinated effort between the US and Mexican governments at a single inspection point at each Port of Entry that permits the flow of legitimate traffic at inspection point speeds.

Technology exists to 1) place a dual-energy, ultra-low dose x-ray scanner at each and every lane of southbound traffic, 2) view vehicular scans at monitors within Mexican Aduana facilities – already located at southbound entrances to Mexico and 3) Fit the scanner frames with a radio frequency sensor to catch I-94 permits re-entering Mexico.

### BENEFITS of PROPOSED SOLUTION:

- **100% of all vehicles entering Mexico are inspected without a significant increase to current wait times entering Mexico – and without automobiles being stopped in primary traffic.**
- US-VISIT requirements are met using the most efficient means.
- The dual-energy, ultra-low dose x-ray scanner provides a more complete inspection than the currently used (in secondary inspection areas) Z-Portal. They can be placed in all lanes of traffic due to relatively compact size; and each unit costs approximately 1/3 of the cost of a Z-Portal unit – with significantly lower installation costs.
- US Merida Initiative funds can gain more “bang for buck;” and can be used to assist Mexico, while the inspecting units are place in the US.
- The dual-energy, ultra-low dose x-ray scanners are more efficient than canines, as currently being discussed:
  - A single dog + handler costs a minimum of \$100,000 per year
  - Each team is limited to 40 hours/ week
  - Detection is inconsistent
- The information shared between governments would simply be automobile X-ray images and possibly I-94 registrations (which are held by non-US citizens, thereby rendering moot concerns of information sharing).
- As proposed, with 1) scanners in the US, prior to the actual crossing 2) review centers in Mexico, within Aduana facilities and 3) coordination of agents from both countries, this proposal gives both the United States of America and the United States of Mexico the extraordinary opportunity to show a coordinated, bilateral front against forces threatening to cripple the Western Hemisphere.



Developed Under \$1.6M  
Government Funding

- Vehicles drive through a scanning archway
- An x-ray image appears on the guard's monitor

## San Ysidro/ Tijuana Example

**Row of Scanners**

