

Resolution No:

Meeting Date: October 19, 2021

RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LIFT ALL RESTRICTIONS ON NON-  
ESSENTIAL TRAVEL AT THE SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA PORTS OF ENTRY

WHEREAS, in March 2020, given the outbreak of COVID-19 within the United States and globally, the Secretary of Homeland Security determined that the risk of continued transmission of COVID-19 between the United States, Mexico and Canada, posed a “specific threat to human life and national interests”; and

WHEREAS, on March 21, 2020, under the Trump Administration, the United States Department of Homeland Security implemented temporary restrictions that limit entry of people traveling via land borders into the United States from Mexico or Canada regardless of their country of origin; these restrictions, however, do not apply to air, freight rail, or sea travel between the United States and Mexico, but do apply to passenger rail and ferry travel between the United States, Mexico, and Canada; and

WHEREAS, the travel restrictions continue to remain in effect as part of an ongoing effort by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under Title 42 Section 265 of the United States Code to deter the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, in September 2021, the Department of Homeland Security announced its extension of non-essential travel restrictions through October 21, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the San Diego – Tijuana Region is located in the southwest corner of the United States border with Mexico border; San Diego County is part of the California-Baja region, one of the most dynamic and innovative “mega-regions” in the world where the proximity between cities on both sides of the border has resulted in an interdependent relationship, including shared economic and environmental concerns, border infrastructure, and a linked transportation system; and

WHEREAS, approximately 7.3 million people live on both sides of the 150 mile international border in California and Baja California; and

WHEREAS, our communities, economies, and quality of life across the United States – Mexico border are intrinsically connected and blended, making trade a key driver of the economy and employment; and

WHEREAS, much of the region and our Nation’s prosperity hinges on border crossings that facilitate the movement of people and goods that support binational trade, tourism, manufacturing, and the free exchange of cultures, ideas, and education; and

WHEREAS, San Diego County is suffering from a weekly economic loss to its retail sector of at least \$7.5 million dollars due to the continuation of non-essential travel restrictions; with a 40% estimated economic loss for tourism and retail; and

WHEREAS, 70% of manufacturing and construction businesses have been economically impacted by the disruption of integrated supply chains, 25% are international organizations; and

WHEREAS, in San Ysidro alone, 200 businesses have permanently closed, representing over 1,900 jobs lost and 72% of revenue loss in that community as 80% of San Ysidro businesses rely on cross-border customers; and

WHEREAS, the state of California officially reopened on June 15, 2021 and other states across the Nation followed soon after, travel policies should align with those at our land ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security has provided no metrics or benchmark for the region to meet to lift restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego's efforts to vaccinate the public have substantially reduced the spread and risk of COVID-19 with the eligible population being fully vaccinated at 79.4% countywide and 88.7% having received at least one dose of the vaccine, and in South Region 90.3% of the eligible population being fully vaccinated and 99.2% having received at least one dose; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego continues to work with its binational partners to address the needs of our transborder population, with County leadership forming a Binational COVID-19 sector to facilitate communication, share response strategies, exchange data, and support; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego created binational interventions to provide vaccine access including a partnership with UC San Diego Health, Mexican Consulate, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Baja California Secretary of Health and six U.S. subsidiary companies operating in Baja, resulting in over 26,000 vaccinations for maquiladora workers in Tijuana; and

WHEREAS, our neighbors in the State of Baja California have fully vaccinated 80.46% of individuals 18 and over, and in the immediate city of Tijuana 82% of individuals 18 and over have been fully vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, our region is working towards an equitable economic recovery that benefits all communities, yet border communities are still being impacted daily and recovery for that region will take longer; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Diego is making significant investments in the future of our binational region;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the County of San Diego calls upon the federal government to lift all restrictions on non-essential travel at San Diego/Tijuana Ports of Entry, so our binational communities can fully reopen and begin a true economic recovery.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY  
COUNTY COUNSEL

By: Lisa Macchione  
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