



Stop Illegal Migration, Not Trade

December 19, 2023

North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO) recognizes that border security, trade and commerce are interrelated. They are integral to the North American economy and should be treated as such. Our freight network is the backbone of the nation's economy and must be kept moving at all times.

We can have safe, secure borders while keeping the borders open for commerce. It is imperative the White House and U.S. Congress find a solution for the migrant crisis, but they cannot create another chaotic and destructive crisis while doing so.

Interrupting trade and commerce that flows across our border should not occur without consulting with companies and stakeholders in consultation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Discussion with businesses, affected companies, stakeholders and local governments is crucial. This lack of communication significantly affects not just the local entities, but the North American economy by hundreds of millions of dollars each day.

NASCO acknowledges the tremendous strain DHS resources are under. CBP staff cannot continue to be diverted to facilitate illegal entry. Stopping or congesting free trade and commerce to Mexico, our largest trading partner, is not a solution. Mexico, too, needs to promote a clearer message to illegal migrants transiting their nation. Between the United States and Mexico insisting on a stricter border policy, we believe a more secure border will be achieved.

The CBP decision to close borders and international rail crossings this week most directly and immediately impacts operations for two Class I railroads in the US – Union Pacific and BNSF – and Ferromex on the Mexican side. Ultimately, every railroad is affected by this sudden shutdown of operations because all carriers interchange goods across the North American rail network which spans Mexico, the United States, and Canada. The downstream impacts will be felt immediately and acutely by shippers and finally by customers.

Trade and security are national issues of equal importance. Commerce is security and security creates commerce. North America is the most competitive region on earth. Trade and commerce are the foundation upon which our competitiveness – and security – rely.

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About NASCO:

North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO) is the leading network of North American governments, business, and educational institutions, driven by a common interest in collaboration along commercial corridors and trade networks. Founded in 1994, NASCO advances North America's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Learn more at www.nasconetwork.com.