

January 6, 2023

Presidents Biden, López Obrador and Prime Minister Trudeau:

As the Texas Association of Business, we commend you for calling this upcoming North American Leaders Summit. The Summit is a great opportunity for leadership of all three countries to come together to address the proper development of our region. We respectfully urge you to commit to implementing the right actions and strategies that will make North America the most prosperous, competitive, and self-reliant economic region in the world.

The Texas Association of Business represents thousands of companies of every size and industry as well as local and regional chambers of commerce. Texas' strategic geographical location in the center of our continental region has made it North America's busiest trade gateway. An estimated \$451 billion worth of goods cross through Texas ports annually to both Mexico and Canada. On behalf of the Texas business community, we encourage you to take urgent action in several concrete areas:

USMCA - North American leaders need to recommit to the proper execution of the rules and guidelines established in the USMCA and adequately fulfill their respective obligations as established and required in the trade agreement. The economic environment fostered by the full implementation of the agreement benefits North America at all levels. Leaders from the three nations must constructively and actively engage with government and business stakeholders so the USMCA can be fully and properly implemented.

Trade Facilitation - Develop programs and simplify operational policies to expedite cross-border commercial activity. Texas companies and stakeholders have seen first-hand the bottlenecks that can occur under current trade rules and regulations. A less bureaucratic trade facilitation would benefit all three nations by attracting more business and investments to the region.

Border Infrastructure and Presidential Permits - Provide proper funding and draft policies that improve border infrastructure, including physical, technological, and operational aspects. Approximately, 68% of the trade between the US and Mexico passes through the Texas-Mexico border. To accommodate for anticipated growth in trade between our three countries, we strongly encourage increasing resources for border crossings along the Texas-Mexico border. Such funding would ensure we have technologically superior, next-generation crossings. Not to mention, Texas shares 28 border crossings with Mexico and will certainly require the development of additional crossings.

We also ask that you support a presidential permitting process that allows border infrastructure development to flourish. This involves removing unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles from the presidential permitting process and allows the certainty needed to signal and encourage private investment.

Business Immigration - Businesses require immigration policies that attract global talent, foreign direct investment, and foster the creation of jobs. We urge you to implement the necessary policies to immediately shorten wait times for student, tourist, work, and business visas.

Close to 2,000 foreign corporations are based in Texas and nearly one million jobs are supported by trade in the state. Delays in the issuance of work visas severely impacts productivity and causes concern in the private sector about having

the ability to maintain a proper labor force. Sustaining labor growth in the future will require immigration reforms that more readily attract foreign workers based on their employment prospects and skills. TN visas, as advocated in the USMCA, provide the right framework for the North American business community to meet their professional workforce needs.

Delays in the issuance of tourist visas are also significant because they harm cities, particularly in border areas. Given the extensiveness of our shared border region with Mexico, a large part of our economy depends on foreign visitors that use their tourist visas for shopping and vacations boosting regional development.

Furthermore, North America needs to foster academic exchanges in higher education among the three countries by facilitating and supporting the expansion of student visas. Investing in increasing academic exchanges will in turn ensure that the business community in the region will have a qualified labor force, not only in professional and technical skills, but also knowledgeable of the respective business culture and social norms in each of our three countries.

These visa holders are often substantial contributors to our economy, working in high-level positions for major global corporations, attending universities, and spending their hard-earned dollars in our hotels, shops, and restaurants.

We appreciate and thank you for re-engaging in this North American Leaders Summit. The conversations you will be a part of are invaluable to the continued growth and success of our economic area.

The Texas Association of Business shares a vision of regional cooperation with our national and international colleagues. On behalf of the Texas business community, we stand ready to serve as a constructive partner in any effort to improve and strengthen the North American region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Hamer", written in a cursive style.

Glenn Hamer
President and CEO