



PRESS RELEASE:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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El Paso County Holds Follow-Up Meeting with Export Manufacturing Industry

Recruitment and Awareness Efforts Continue for Tornillo Port of Entry

EL PASO, TX— On February 23, 2024, representatives from El Paso County convened with binational stakeholders from the export manufacturing industry, carriers, and customs agents from the Paso del Norte Region and Chihuahua City in El Paso, Texas. The meeting was a continuation of ongoing efforts to promote commercial crossings on the Tornillo Port of Entry (PoE). During a recent trip to Chihuahua City, stakeholders identified key challenges inhibiting the full utilization of Tornillo PoE. Concerns that were discussed included security, freight costs, and the need for streamlined customs processes.

Currently, the Tornillo PoE handles commercial cargo Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In recent discussions with Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) leadership, they have indicated that without a significant growth in cargo traffic, CBP could shift resources to other ports and halt processing traffic in Tornillo.

Over 60 private sector representatives attended the February 23rd meeting with County officials to discuss the benefits of utilizing the Tornillo PoE. El Paso County's Economic Development Department has been actively addressing this challenge through a comprehensive approach that includes identifying local traffic from Juarez and traffic from farther south in Chihuahua.

Recognizing the importance of binational coordination, the meeting targeted key stakeholders and authorities from the US and Mexico. (US and Mx Consulates, ANAM, and CBP). Following a resolution, participants reached a consensus to establish either a committee or a coalition comprised of multiple users to effectively engage with both US and Mexican authorities. This initiative aims to comprehensively address the diverse needs of users through collaborative efforts, ensuring that pertinent issues are properly addressed and resolved.

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During the first stakeholder meeting held on January 25, 2024, in Chihuahua City, the following resolutions arose with verbal agreements/commitments:

- Offices for Customs Agents in the United States: U.S. and Mexican officials offered to address office issues to facilitate customs agents from both countries with nearby facilities for expedited processes.
- Commercial Schedule: Participants proposed a revised schedule to CBP Port Director Fernandez to better accommodate present and potential users.
- Incentives for Commercial Cargo Transport: On the Mexican side of the border, it was agreed to offer discounts to encourage regular commercial crossing usage.

Through these strategic partnerships, the County has been able to leverage collective expertise, resources, and networks to overcome challenges and unlock new opportunities, ultimately enhancing operational capabilities and advancing shared objectives. El Paso County continues to work with stakeholders and remains committed to increase throughput through the Tornillo PoE.



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