



## **Next Covid-19 relief package should direct infrastructure funds to border projects that are critical to reducing congestion, bolstering trade**

*Potential for improvements to a revised Coordinated Border Infrastructure program*

As Congress begins deliberations over its next Covid-19 relief package, the BTA strongly urges any infrastructure funding elements to include a focus on the nation's borders, whose importance is more pronounced than ever as we seek to ensure continued freight mobility. The Coordinated Border Infrastructure program, with some improvements, provides a strong starting point.

### **What is the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program?**

CBI was originally included in the multiyear highway bill known as SAFETEA-LU in sections 1101(a)(11), 1303. Program funds, distributed to states by formula, can be directed to projects within 100 miles of the U.S.-Canada or U.S.-Mexico land border for the following types of improvements:

- improvements to existing transportation and supporting infrastructure
- construction of highways and related safety and safety enforcement facilities related to international trade
- operational improvements, including those related to electronic data interchange and use of telecommunications
- modifications to regulatory procedures
- international coordination of transportation planning, programming, and border operation with Canada and Mexico.

### **Unique features**

- A border state may use these funds to construct a project in Canada or Mexico if the project directly and predominantly facilitates cross-border vehicle and cargo movement at an international port of entry.
- Up to 15% or \$5M (whichever is less) of the state's border program funds may be transferred to GSA to carry out 1 or more eligible projects.

### **CBI eligibility in the FAST Act**

From the portion of a state's Surface Transportation **Block Grant** Program apportionment available for use in any area of a state, the Governor of a border state may designate up to 5 percent for border infrastructure projects eligible under the SAFETEA-LU Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program. [FAST Act § 1437].

### **Keeping pace with rising trade volumes**

It is critical that border states have access to funding tools that allow them to ensure their border infrastructure keeps pace with rising cross-border commercial traffic volumes. Total trade volumes transported via truck have increased by 191 percent since 1995 Consider:



- There were 6.4 million truck entries over the Mexico border in 2019
- Trucks accounted for 83% of the goods moved across the southern border by surface trade
- There were 5.7 million truck movements across the Canadian border in 2019
- Trucks accounted for 68% of the goods moved across the northern border by surface trade

### **Expanding CBI dollars' impact: Planning and design**

The BTA believes CBI funding can be more impactful if monies can be applied to more uses. Specifically, CBI usage eligibility should be broadened to include planning and design of border-area infrastructure projects, as well as to include freight intermodal connectors that connect ports of entry to other road systems.

Expanding the funding's usage will help accelerate border-area projects and aligns with the program's goal to facilitate the completion of infrastructure that reduces congestion and facilitates trade throughput in the border region.