

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2025

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Border Trade Alliance applauds Senate passage of National Defense Authorization Act including language to streamline permit requirements for cross-border infrastructure

WASHINGTON—The Border Trade Alliance cheered the U.S. Senate for passing the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which includes important language to streamline the issuance of presidential permits for international bridge and port of entry infrastructure projects.

The provision builds on years of bipartisan efforts to modernize the federal permitting process for cross-border infrastructure, ensuring that vital projects along the U.S.–Mexico and U.S.–Canada borders can advance more efficiently and predictably. Presidential permits are required for the construction and expansion of international crossings, but the process has long been criticized for being overly bureaucratic and time-consuming.

“Modern, secure, and efficient ports of entry are fundamental to North American competitiveness,” Border Trade Alliance President Ms. Britton Mullen said. “The inclusion of this language in the NDAA is a major step toward improving how we permit and deliver cross-border infrastructure. We thank Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Senator Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) for their leadership and commitment to cutting red tape while maintaining high standards of security and environmental review. Their work ensures that our border communities, and the national economy they support, can continue to thrive.”

Streamlining the presidential permit process helps deliver on the promise of previous executive and legislative reforms while adding important certainty and durability to the process.

“Cross-border infrastructure is of national strategic importance,” Border Trade Alliance Chairman Pete Sepulveda, Jr. said. “This reform will help modernize infrastructure and move goods, services, and people more efficiently across our borders and strengthen the U.S. position in global trade.”

The BTA has long advocated for modernization of the presidential permitting process, including through its support of precursor permitting language in the FY 2024 NDAA legislative solutions to codify and improve the procedures established under a previously issued executive order.

“We look forward to the conference committee with the House version, and we urge both parties to maintain this important presidential permit language in the final version of the bill that gets sent to the president,” Mullen said.

About the Border Trade Alliance

Since 1986, the BTA has served as a grassroots, non-profit organization that provides a forum for discussion and advocacy on issues pertaining to border development and quality of life and trade in the Americas. A network of public and private sector representatives from the United States, Mexico and Canada, BTA's core values include a commitment to improving the quality of life of border communities through trade and commerce. The BTA is online at thebta.org and [@borderalliance](https://twitter.com/borderalliance).

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