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BLC 101



What is the Border Legislative Conference?

The BLC is a way for state legislators in the U.S. and Mexico to engage in discussions about issues important to the areas they serve.

Who is Involved in the BLC?

Legislators from 10 states along the U.S.-Mexico border are members. In the U.S., that's Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. In Mexico, that's Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sonora and Tamaulipas.

Who Coordinates the Program?

The BLC is a joint program between The Council of State Governments-*WEST* and CSG's Southern Legislative Conference. Staff members from those regional organizations provide administrative support, including the coordination and organization of forums, preparation of recommendations and analysis, and implementation of policies and actions as directed by BLC members. Martha Castaneda serves as director of the BLC.

Who are Officers in the BLC?

California Sen. Denise Moreno Ducheny is the chair and Diputado Ramiro Flores Morales of the Coahuila Congress is vice-chair.

How is the BLC Funded?

The U.S. Agency for International Development—or USAID—provides funding for the program.

Why is the BLC Important?

The BLC fosters the development of shared solutions to common problems faced by states on both sides of the border.

What is the Economic Relationship between the U.S. and Mexico?

The U.S. and Mexico border is one of the longest borders in the world, as well as one of the most heavily traversed by both goods and people. The U.S. is Mexico's largest trade partner in both exports and imports, while Mexico is the U.S.'s second largest buyer and third largest supplier of goods.

How is BLC Involved in the U.S.-Mexico State Alliance Partnership?

The U.S.-Mexico State Alliance Partnership is a collaborative, multi-branch alliance in which CSG-*WEST* and the SLC are involved in an effort aimed at strengthening cooperation among state officials and institutions of the U.S. and Mexico. The Alliance Partnership promotes and convenes binational exchanges and workshops among border legislators, attorneys general, treasurers and others that enhance the role of state officials in addressing shared public policy concerns that transcend international borders.

What are the BLC's Goals with Regard to the Alliance Partnership?

Members of the BLC in April adopted a proposal to add a component to the Alliance Partnership aimed at strengthening local/regional border communities. The objective is to work with BLC members and local border officials to convene binational exchanges to promote strong border communities and to strengthen binational mechanisms of cooperation.

What Specific Issues Does the BLC Currently Address?

The BLC addresses a number of issues, including economic development, border crossings, environment, water, illegal trafficking and security. Members attending the conference in April affirmed the need to reactivate the BLC Health Committee. Issues are determined at the end of one forum for the following forum; and the BLC will continue to address scrap tire legislation and ways to create rubberized asphalt from scrap tires, energy in the border region, successful programs to abate graffiti and health indexes of the border region. Those issues will also be discussed in Sonora this fall based on discussions in April.

How Will BLC-coordinated Efforts for Cross-Border Cooperation Encompass Security, Rule of Law, Energy, Mobility and Sustainable Jobs?

Cross-border cooperation is largely based on relationships and trust, and the BLC, as well as many other binational organizations, contribute to this. Regarding all these realms, state legislators are in a position to introduce and pass legislation to address any and all of these issues. Sometimes, observations of cross-border dynamics such as the make-up of the pool of workers or job markets through exchange of information among state legislators can lead to better coordination for creating sustainable jobs. 