



A Latina CEO's Perspective:

Share your business case on Trade with Mexico

Unpredictability.

“The Business Case”.

America First.

These are the three statements that summarize my recent trip to Washington DC with the Arizona Chamber of Commerce delegation. We flew to Washington DC the first week of February to meet with our Arizona Federal delegation following the Inauguration. As the furor of the cabinet nominations surrounded us, we quietly met with our Senators, Congressmen, industry groups, key Senate committees and other influencers.

I left for home with a full notebook from the various meetings, optimism about a more business-friendly national environment balanced with concern for the economic impact of many policy changes being considered. Priorities addressed from our Tucson Hispanic Chamber Legislative Principles included the recent discussions surrounding NAFTA (the North American Free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada), the Affordable Care Act, comprehensive tax reform and potential small business lending impacts from modifications to the Dodd Frank Rule. Several speakers also addressed the elimination of many of the 180,000 regulations which create unnecessary burden on businesses. It is clear since Inauguration that President Trump is living by the mantra of “Big Action and Quick Results” in his intent to get the economy moving again.

Communication with our Congressmen and Senators is key in today’s unpredictable environment. Most elected leaders we met with spoke at length about the uncertainty of President Trump’s policy priorities and requested “business stories” and data to combat the many questions arising from the President’s actions.

During the meetings, we spoke about the importance of trade with Mexico as Arizona's number one trading partner. Due to the President's focus on tariffs and "walls" (estimated to cost \$14 billion), the nation is in a very dangerous time for our bilateral relationship and faces a threat to the \$600 billion in trade the U.S enjoys with Mexico today. It is clear that there is a distorted picture of NAFTA in our nation's capital. Rather than losing jobs due to a trade deficit, per the Mexico Institute, more than 4.9 million jobs in the U.S are tied to trade with Mexico. Additionally, more than 50% of our manufactured goods are sent as component parts back and forth to Mexico. Our chamber and others spoke during meetings against the proposed Border Adjustment tax (or 20% import tariff for U.S firms) due to the likely increase in U.S consumer prices and shared concern for our future lack of global competitiveness.

A *NAFTA 2.0* is certainly in the works for the 22-year old agreement and it is an opportune time to communicate about any potential changes such as the growth of services in trade, e-commerce and business opportunities due to Mexico's energy reform. Simultaneously, our nation should coordinate valuable small business education export resources within the Departments of Commerce, State and the SBA - all mostly unknown by Arizona small businesses.

Influence on President Trump and his Cabinet is vital for our business community. We do not need to convince each other of the importance of trade, but those living further away from our borders and those with influence within the President's Administration. Trade with Mexico impacts every state in our nation and is not limited to the four U.S / Mexico border states. In such rapidly changing times, our chamber is engaged with others across the country who share the same concerns. We need a strategic communication plan to send a targeted message that meets President Trump's economic priorities while sustaining our relationship with one of Arizona and the nation's closest allies – Mexico

What can you do now? **We need your business stories. If you are manufacturing in Mexico, what financial impact will a 20% import tariff have on your business?** Please email your business cases to be shared with our federal delegation to president@tucsonhispanicchamber.org or call our chamber office at 520-620-0005. This is not the time to be silent.

Thank you for your continued support of our Hispanic chambers. If you've not yet joined, please consider doing so to provide the financial support to continue our work and to take advantage of our services to grow your business.

Sincerely,

Lea Márquez Peterson, MBA

President/CEO

Tucson Hispanic Chamber and our affiliate chambers in Douglas, Sierra Vista and Ambos Nogales

www.TucsonHispanicChamber.org

823 E Speedway Blvd
Tucson, AZ 85719

See what's happening on our social sites

