



# BTA urges GSA to consider design alternatives at San Ysidro Port of Entry

*The San Ysidro border crossing is vital to the San Diego-Tijuana region's economy. GSA's reconfiguration of the port should reflect the needs of the community and existing businesses. The BTA sent the following letter to the GSA on this matter:*

July 11, 2014

The Honorable Dan M. Tangherlini  
Administrator  
US General Services Administration  
1800 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20405  
Dear Administrator Tangherlini:

Since 1986, the Border Trade Alliance has sought to support and promote public policy and private sector initiatives that encourage growth in cross-border trade and travel across the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders. Consistent with that mission, we believe that thoughtfully designed and constructed land border ports of entry are critical to efficient and secure borders.

As you know, the port of entry at San Ysidro, which is the world's busiest and of vital importance to the overall economic health of the San Diego-Tijuana region, is in the midst of a major reconfiguration and expansion. We would urge your agency to ensure that any port design plan protect the interests of existing local businesses, whose livelihoods depend on their proximity to the port, and provides access to parking and safe pedestrian pick-up and drop-off areas.

For many businesses, their proximity to the international border and their ability to capture cross-border consumer traffic is a central component of their success and contributes to the region's ability to create jobs. While the BTA is supportive of efforts to modernize aging infrastructure along our land borders, the needs of these location-dependent businesses should not be forgotten.

The BTA last month was proud to participate in a community forum in San Ysidro where public and private sector stakeholders were presented with an alternative design plan that would help mitigate the negative effects on existing businesses while providing the parking and pedestrian access that is in such demand at this busy port of entry.

As the nation slowly emerges from a steep economic downturn, our organization would encourage GSA to give strong consideration to the merits of this alternative design concept, which is less likely to harm existing jobs and businesses.

Thank you in advance as you review this project. The interests of communities and local businesses and those of a federal government that has a legitimate and necessary desire to design and construct secure ports of entry need not be at odds; we can have both. Together we can arrive at a design solution that strikes a balance between the needs of all affected stakeholders, ensuring that security does not have to be compromised in order to promote a robust border business environment.

Sincerely,  
**Jesse Hereford**  
Chair

**Noe Garcia, III**  
President