

# PRESS RELEASE

2310 SAN BERNARDO AVE.

P.O. BOX 790

LAREDO, TX 78042

TEL. 956-722-9895

FAX 956-791-4503

For immediate release: Tuesday, March 13, 2018

CONTACT: Miriam Castillo, Vice President  
(956) 722-9895 [miriam@laredochamber.com](mailto:miriam@laredochamber.com)

## Laredo G-13 Delegation Promotes Business Agenda in DC

LAREDO CHAMBER JOINS CITY OFFICIALS IN LEGISLATIVE TRIP TO NATION'S CAPITAL



Earlier this month, G-13 saw its efforts come to fruition. G-13 is a group of local business and educational organizations that have joined forces to advance issues of interest to the private sector. The group joined the City of Laredo delegation on its annual legislative trip to Washington, DC. This is the second consecutive year that the Laredo G-13 delegation collaborates with the Chamber's on the annual legislative trip. The group hand-carried with them a legislative plan of action that they had developed over the past few months identifying and advocating issues of importance and interest to the economic development of the business community. These topics were delivered in the form of position papers that were derived through an inclusive, comprehensive manner with the participation of all thirteen local business and educational associations. These included:

- **International Trade and NAFTA** – Laredo is the nation's largest and most important inland port. In 2016 it processed over \$230 billion of cargo. With one of the largest concentrations of U.S. customs brokers and freight forwarders in the nation, this industry represents a major source of employment for the Laredo/Webb area, but it also serves as a gateway for trade for almost every state in the union. A quick renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement is vital to the flow of commerce with the U.S.' leading trade partners.
- **Border Security** – Security of our borders is vital to the safety of the nation's citizenry and to ensure secure flow of legal commerce. The Laredo Chamber supports the strengthening of resources, human and other, in particular at the nation's ports of entry, and the reinforcement of border security with the use of technology.
  - Also included was a recently published white paper "*Common Sense: Border Security Solutions*" by Mr. Dennis Nixon that outlines important elements regarding the cleanup of the Rio Grand to give Border Patrol access and visibility; Clearing the backlog of the immigration court system by hiring more immigration judges; and cost-effective measures that would enhance opportunities for security without building a wall.
- **Infrastructure: Freight Mobility** – Having international bridges that move traffic efficiently is of little consequence if the infrastructure providing access and exit to/from the bridges is antiquated and

inefficient. A case is made to provide additional support for completion of the I-35/I-69 interchange in the short term and for eventual construction of a fifth international bridge.

- **Workforce Development** – Laredo has a young and plentiful labor force; yet highly unskilled. A program to support training in STEM and technological fields is proposed.
- **Transportation** – Laredo has two major railroads and over 200 trucking companies servicing its freight industry. The local industry offers innovative solutions for the recruitment of drivers as well as support for infrastructure development.

A total of twenty-six members representative of the various G-13 business organizations signed up for the legislative trip to Washington, DC. In the nation’s capital, the group hosted a breakfast meeting with U.S. Senator Cornyn, who addressed the group and reassured his support of the INFRA Grant application for the Laredo I-35/I69W improvements project. The group also had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Henry Cuellar, Senator Ted Cruz and his staff; Congressman David Reichert, Chair of the Subcommittee for Trade; Congressman Mike Conaway, Chair on the House Committee on Agriculture; as well as experts in particular fields from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. These included: Monique Thierry, Executive Director of USCC Southwest & South Central Regional Office; Christopher Wenk, Executive Director for International Policy; Jon Baselice, Director of Immigration Policy; and Ed Mortimer, Executive Director of Transportation and Infrastructure Policy Team. Some members of the group had opportunity to attend a breakfast meeting addressing the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement which featured David MacNaughton, who serves as Canada’s Ambassador to the United States; Gerónimo Gutiérrez, who serves as Mexico’s Ambassador to the United States; U.S. Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas; and, U.S. Representative Will Hurd, from the 23rd Congressional District of Texas.

Forming the business delegation were:

Mario Pena	Laredo Chamber of Commerce/IBC
Cassandra Wheeler	Laredo Chamber of Commerce/TAMIU
Miguel A. Conchas	Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Miriam Castillo	Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Henry Sauvignet	Laredo Chamber of Commerce/IBC
Andrew Carranco	Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Enrique Gonzalez	Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brkrs. Assoc.
J.D. Gonzalez	Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brkrs. Assoc.
Arturo Dominguez	Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brkrs. Assoc.
Melissa Huddleston	Laredo Motorcarriers Assoc.
Ernesto Gaytan	Laredo Motorcarriers Assoc.
Gerardo Maldonado	Laredo Motorcarriers Assoc.
Jesus Marina	Association of Laredo Forwarding Agents
Gonzalo Prida	Association of Laredo Forwarding Agents
Edgardo Pedraza	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.
Luis Viñals	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.
Carlos Martinez	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.
Martha Reyes	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.
Yolanda Malagon	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.

Fortino Fernandez	Asociación de Agentes Aduanales de N. Ldo.
Francisco Marquez	Asociación de Empresarios Mexicanos
Gilberto Gamboa	Laredo Board of Realtors
Olivia Varela	Laredo Economic Development Corporation
Tony Arce	Laredo Economic Development Corporation/AEP
Rolando Ortiz	Laredo Economic Development Corporation
Dr. Pablo Arenaz	TAMIU

The Laredo Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1915 is Laredo's and Webb County's longest running business organization. The Laredo Chamber works constantly to create a business-friendly environment in the community. It currently counts with 700 members within its rolls, representing every facet of the business community.

###