



PORTS-TO-PLAINS

ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
North America's Energy & Agricultural Heartland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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US Senator Cory Gardner Introduces Ports-to-Plains Highway Act to Designate Future Interstate along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor

(LUBBOCK) – US Senator Cory Gardner (CO) introduced the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act (S.4701), a bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 with respect to future interstate designations along the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor, to the Senate floor on Thursday, Sept. 24. Following the reading, U.S. Senator John Cornyn (TX) signed on to co-sponsor the legislation, and it was referred to the committee on Environment and Public Works.

“A future interstate designation along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is catalytic for the future of trade in the United States,” said John Osborne, chairman of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance. “Not only will we increase the efficiency of transporting imports and exports to our primary trading partners but this project offers significant economic benefits for the communities along the corridor as well as safety benefits for travelers.”

The proposed interstate expansion will move agricultural products from the Ports-to-Plains region to urban domestic markets, coastal export markets and to the Canadian and Mexican borders. With connections along the major international border at Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio, the corridor generates over \$206 billion annually in international commerce with the nation’s top two trading partners, Canada and Mexico.

Along with the nation’s agricultural community, a future designated interstate will serve America’s energy heartland, from traditional resources like oil and gas to renewable resources such as wind, solar and biofuels. Development of these resources is critical to our energy security, providing our country with stable and more affordable power sources.

Travel on the country's Interstate Highways is nearly twice as safe as travel on all other roadways. Road safety will be improved by 268% by mitigating the truck traffic primarily caused by energy and agriculture-related commerce, which will result in reduced fatalities and injuries, according to TxDOT.

As trucks enter the United States at the Texas/Mexico border, I-35 is the only north/south interstate from Laredo, the No.1 exporting inland port in the U.S. in 2019. Currently, this inland port offers one route to connect these goods and services to their destination. Nearly 600 miles separates I-35 in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas and I-25 in New Mexico and Colorado, making this one of the largest gaps in the U.S. without north-south interstate connectivity.

The extension of the Interstate Highway would also bring significant economic development to communities along the corridor. Business developers within manufacturing and distribution services

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recommend locations along an Interstate Highway. With more businesses moving to these communities, additional services such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores and restaurants see growth. This expansion stimulates local economies and provides additional opportunities to communities along the interstate.

“We are thrilled for this momentous legislation which will designate an interstate along the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor and bring a significant economic impact to the region as well as safety improvements for travelers on I-25,” said Cathy Shull, executive director of Pro 15 and member of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance board of directors. “Once completed, the infrastructure will alleviate heavy congestion by redirecting freight traffic east, paving the way for future economic development in eastern Colorado and increasing the productivity of drivers transporting Colorado exported goods to Mexico and Canada.”

The Ports-to-Plains Act serves as a companion to H.R. 7151, legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by U.S. Representatives Jodey Arrington (TX-19), Henry Cuellar (TX-28), Kay Granger (TX-12), Mac Thornberry (TX-13) and Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3).

Ports-to-Plains Alliance

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of over 200 communities and businesses, including alliance partners Heartland Expressway and Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, whose mission is to advocate for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada. Additional information on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is available at <http://www.portstoplains.com/>.

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