



# PORTS-TO-PLAINS

## ALLIANCE

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

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### **John Osborne Comments in Acuña, Coahuila**

### **United We Build**

### **November 1, 2018**

This is my first trip to Acuña and I was enlightened about the amount of investment and industry expansion taking place throughout the region. I am impressed with the dramatic change that business and industry have shared how infrastructure investment over the past 20 years has allowed the city of Acuña to grow along with the businesses. This conference has been about building support and uniting together to be even stronger in moving this entire corridor forward in the future.

Over the years, mayors, and community representatives have changed. I compare it to one of your favorite sports team and how it requires a full team of players on the field. Each player has their own role and responsibility. They must all work together, united, to win the game. But over the course of time, players change, and new players come on board, however the end goal is still the same...to win the game.

Ports-to-Plains has evolved over the past 20 years, just as each of your cities in Coahuila have evolved. I give a lot of credit to the previous boards, our past executive director and all the efforts of our members to develop the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Just as we sometimes need to change players on our sports team, Ports-to-Plains has experienced change in the past year. However the goal is still the same. We want the future of our communities to be thriving and good for our citizens. One way to accomplish this is with businesses and jobs. Businesses need trade to take place. The way trade takes place is with investments in our infrastructure. These small investments now last a lifetime. They change the landscape of the playing field. On the tour that I participated in during the conference in Acuña, there was a discussion about where the product comes from and where they ship it to. They are truly an international company, not because they ship back and forth from the United States, but because they ship their product to Australia, Asia and Europe. Much of their product goes in and out of Long Beach, CA. Long Beach, CA is one of the busiest ports in the United States. Yet, just to the southwest, here in Mexico, there is the developing port of Mazatlán. The development of that port is key, and not just to Mexico. There is a company based in San Antonio called HEB. HEB also imports products from China and Asia. They did a study in which they shipped product through Long Beach and a product shipped through Mazatlán. They found that shipping the product through Mazatlán got their product to Texas two weeks faster than shipping through Long Beach. This results in savings to the company by getting product to market much faster. On the tour that I was on, when Long Beach shut down for two weeks, the company had to look for an alternative shipping port and they chose Mazatlán. The problem was that they went back to Long Beach and did not stay with Mazatlán. That does two things: it means that it is tougher for the rest of Mexico to develop if you do not have product moving in and out of Mazatlán. It also means that it does not help with the congestion at Long Beach.

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The dream of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is to have a new trade route to move product into markets. One of the key components of all of this is you. All of you can indicate that you want investment in Mazatlán. That investment then brings about investment here in Acuña. The natural trade route to bring goods into the United States is right here. We know there are challenges in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo in terms of capacity. The development of the border crossing here in Acuña/Del Rio is hugely important.

One of Ports-to-Plain's biggest priorities is to see interstate development and investment in the highway system between Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio all the way up through Lubbock. The way our friends in the state and federal departments of transportation look at these, is the need for highway investment. Therefore, the conversations with your businesses here and your government in Mexico is about looking at how those investments are made and how important it is to us in Texas and the rest of the United States.

Mayor, I know the reason that you do the investments in our community are for your community. But what those investments in your community, mean for the rest of the world and more specifically for North America, are actually much bigger. These things are no small task to complete. Sometimes it is a little piece here and a little piece there, however, those investments make things better and make it easier for the bigger investment to take place. I hope that investments in the Acuña Ports of Entry, making it easier to cross the border, are just a small step in the investment you plan.

I respectfully request that you continue to advocate for additional investment from Mazatlán all the way to Acuña. Not only will it help bring business and industry to Acuña, but it will help Ports-to-Plains show why additional investment needs to be made in our highway infrastructure going north.

That may sound one way, but there is product in the United States that needs to come to Mexico. We visited with one such company during the tour. We have one of the largest oil fields in the world and it is just north of Acuña. We are interested in trade and interested in trading a lot of energy and, as you all continue to grow here in Mexico, you will need more access to that kind of energy. Therefore, the trade that comes out of Texas into Mexico is important to you all.

Please know that we are also advocating for investment in the infrastructures to the north. Just like your investments in Mexico in infrastructure will help us, our investments will help you.

The city of Acuña has supported Ports-to-Plains either through membership or sponsorships for approximately 20 years. We need more members from Mexico being a part of this Alliance. It is not about the dollars of membership. It is about the power of advocacy. The advocacy to work together, to pull together, and to be united. What I have seen in my time here in Acuña and Del Rio is how much more united we are than we even realized.

Mayor, you should know that we had people from all over the United States, along this corridor, with us at the conference in Acuña. We had members from Canada, the United States and Mexico along with five states up and down the corridor. The messages you have been giving today through your presentations are heard. Newspaper reporting can sometimes be misleading. While I live about five or six hours north of here, I did not realize how much investment was taking place in your infrastructure. Please know that we are working our very best to do the same kind of investment going north. We very much value the relationship we have with your city and your region. Let's continue this so we can have

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another great 20 years. Thank you so very much for allowing me to speak at the conference in Acuña. Please note that just because some of our players have changed do not think the goal has changed. We have been very much united in our efforts to get investment in our infrastructure. Muchas Gracias!