



May 28, 2021

Xavier Becerra, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Request to Transfer COVID-19 Vaccines Across International Boundaries

Dear Secretary Becerra:

The Southern Arizona Counties have been urging increased opening of the Arizona/Mexico border for business. Decreased rates of COVID-19 in Mexico would benefit this international travel and commerce. As of May 27, 2021, Sonora has over 74,499 cases of COVID-19 with over 6,334 deaths. Increasing vaccination in Sonora, helps mitigate infections and mortality. It also accelerates the return to normal commercial interchange while keeping US border communities safe by decreasing exposure to COVID-19.

Border counties will have tens of thousands of vaccine stock on hand that are risk of expiring by August. Even though these vaccines are in our control they remain a federal asset, and it is not possible for entities to transfer vaccine across international boundaries. Such authorization can only come from the federal government.

The Arizona Border Counties Coalition would like to request the ability to coordinate a transfer of county allocated vaccine that is within 14 days of expiration to public health authorities in Sonora. We are concerned that the lacking of ability to share this resource will lead to wastage. Additionally, we propose to provide vaccination opportunities with those Mexican nationals who regularly cross the international boundary for work and commerce activity.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Teresa Bravo at (520) 724-2005 or teresa.bravo@pima.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Bronson".

The Honorable Sharon Bronson
Pima County Representative
Arizona Border Counties Coalition

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann English".

The Honorable Ann English
Cochise County Representative
Arizona Border Counties Coalition



The Honorable Bruce Bracker
Santa Cruz County Representative
Arizona Border Counties Coalition



The Honorable Tony Reyes
Yuma County Representative
Arizona Border Counties Coalition

- c: Jeffrey Zients, White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator
The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema, US Senator, Arizona
The Honorable Mark Kelly, US Senator, Arizona
The Honorable Ann Kirkpatrick, Congresswoman, Arizona District 2
The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Congressman, Arizona District 3
The Honorable Doug Ducey, Governor, State of Arizona
Cara Christ, MD, MS, Director, Arizona Department of Health Services
Richard Karwaczka, Cochise County Administrator
Jennifer St. John, Santa Cruz County Manager
Susan K. Thorpe, Yuma County Administrator
Chuck Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department