

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and  
Public Lands – *Ranking Member*

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,  
Elementary and Secondary Education  
Subcommittee on Higher Education and  
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October 13, 2011

Congressman Ed Pastor  
2465 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pastor,

I write to you today to urge your support for H.R. 3049, the Border Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2011.

More than 290,000 Arizonans need full time work, including those who are underemployed or have grown too discouraged to continue looking. If statewide numbers are stark enough to prompt us to action, the situation in border communities are enough to consider drastic measures. While unemployment stands at 9.3 percent statewide, it tops 29 percent in Yuma County and 18 percent in Santa Cruz County. More Arizonans than ever are living in poverty, desperately in need of a good job at a living wage.

To make our state a better place to live and get Arizonans back to work, I have introduced legislation to strengthen cross-border trade, modernize and expand border infrastructure, adequately staff ports of entry, invest in innovation and revitalize small business. Together, these initiatives can restore growth, spur job creation and start an economic recovery for border communities and our entire state.

***Strengthen Cross-Border Trade***

Trade between Arizona and Mexico creates and supports jobs for hundreds of thousands of Arizonans and Mexicans. More than 235,700 jobs in Arizona depend directly on trade with Mexico. Last year alone, Arizona-Mexico trade totaled roughly \$10.7 billion.

A strong trade relationship with Mexico is critical to leading Arizona out of recession and creating good middle-class jobs. My bill strengthens cross-border trade by establishing the United States-Mexico Economic Partnership Commission (EPC), whose purpose is to strengthen economic development and commerce along the U.S.-Mexico Border. My bill also establishes the Port Security and Trade Facilitation Grant. This grant expands the access of trusted shipper programs to small and medium-sized businesses.



### ***Modernize and Expand Border Infrastructure***

A recent study by the Arizona Office of Tourism confirmed that Mexican visitors spend more than \$7.3 million per day in Arizona. These economic benefits are threatened today by a severe lack of adequate infrastructure at our ports of entry.

Inadequate infrastructure makes businesses less accessible and less efficient, making job creation and economic recovery more difficult. Infrastructure projects create jobs. My bill expands and modernizes existing border infrastructure aimed at relieving congestion and bottlenecks, facilitating trade and maximizing security.

### ***Adequately Staff Ports of Entry***

Our ports of entry are a critical component of Arizona's economy. The growth of cross-border trade has outpaced our ports' workload capacity, resulting in congestion and delays.

A 2008 draft study by the Department of Commerce found the following (their emphasis): "Today, border wait times at the five busiest southern border [ports of entry] average over one hour, which result in an average economic output loss of \$116 million per minute of delay. In 2008, these delays cost the U.S. economy nearly 26,000 jobs and \$6 billion in output, \$1.4 billion in wages, and \$600 million in tax revenue *annually*. By 2017, average wait times could increase to nearly 100 minutes, costing U.S. more than 54,000 jobs and \$12 billion in output, \$3 billion in wages, and \$1.2 billion in tax revenue *annually*. The *cumulative* loss in output due to border delays over the next ten years is estimated to be \$86 billion."

To reverse these alarming economic trends, my bill increases staffing levels at ports of entry and establishes the Southwest Border Strategy for Security and Prosperity, under which the Secretary of Homeland Security will conduct a thorough review of CBP's current staffing model and make recommendations to reflect current needs.

### ***Invest in Innovation***

We need to prioritize proven technologies to keep America safe. My bill makes cost-effective investments in long-term technological infrastructure to facilitate travel and commerce and allow efficient inspection of people and vehicles entering the U.S.

### ***Small Business Revitalization***

The fastest way to spur economic growth in our state is to revitalize our businesses and reemploy our workers. People earning a living put dollars right back into our local economy. My bill establishes the Border Small Business Revitalization grant program, which will stimulate employment opportunities and capital investment in border communities. My bill also creates local jobs by mandating that at least 30 percent of labor for any federal contract or subcontract is performed by a local subcontractor.

Should you have any questions regarding the Border Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2011, please contact Bertha Guerrero on my staff at (202) 225-2435 or [Bertha.Guerrero@mail.house.gov](mailto:Bertha.Guerrero@mail.house.gov).

Strengthening our economy and creating jobs is a national priority. We cannot afford to slide any farther backwards. I look forward to working closely with you as we continue to improve Arizona's economy and help the families we represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress