



UNITED STATES SENATOR *for* ARIZONA

Strong Ports, Strong Communities Act

THE PROBLEM

Land ports of entry (LPOE) across the U.S. northern and southern borders facilitate nearly 20% of total U.S.-international trade annually and prevent dangerous drugs, contraband, and people from entering our communities.¹ Despite their enormous national economic and security contributions, many LPOEs and related infrastructure are aging and in desperate need of modernization, which holds them back from achieving their full potential.

Additionally, the presence of LPOEs disproportionately impacts the communities in which they are located. For example, due to heavy LPOE-related traffic, nearby communities experience much more significant strain on infrastructure such as local roads and waste management systems than do other municipalities.² Arizona's busiest port, the Nogales-Mariposa LPOE, regularly sees upwards of 20,000 truck crossings per month, yet corridors and bridges surrounding it still require critical improvements.³ Furthermore, since many of these border municipalities are in rural areas, they lack the resources necessary to repair, maintain, and upgrade this infrastructure on their own, reducing their ability to attract investment and the amount of economic activity LPOEs can facilitate.

Exacerbating these challenges is the fact that there is no dedicated funding stream for LPOE construction/modernization, and the funding sources dedicated to border community infrastructure are limited, such as the Department of Transportation's (DOT) [Surface Transportation Block Grant Program](#).⁴ Although Congress provided \$3.4 billion via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for LPOE construction and modernization, local communities are still on the hook to secure additional funds for expensive infrastructure necessary for LPOE operations like roads and water systems.

THE SOLUTION

Based on the Department of Defense (DoD) [Defense Community Infrastructure Program](#),⁵ the *Strong Ports, Strong Communities Act* would create a dedicated funding stream for infrastructure that directly supports LPOEs and to address the disproportionate impacts LPOEs have on nearby community infrastructure. By strengthening LPOEs and the community infrastructure that supports them, the Act would enhance border security, improve the efficiency of lawful trade and travel, support rural border localities, and support Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel, many of whom have families and live near the ports where they work.

¹ "TransBorder Freight Annual Report 2024," Bureau of Transportation Statistics, March 20, 2025, <https://www.bts.gov/newsroom/transborder-freight-annual-report-2024-0#:~:text=Manufacturing%20and%20logistics%20sectors%20across,Canada%20and%2011.7%25%20with%20Mexico.&text=Note:%20Totals%20includes%20mail%20and%20other>.

² Ryan Cantu, "Trump's Tariffs Add to Challenges for Laredo, the Nation's Top Port," Texas Monthly, April 9, 2025, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/trumps-tariffs-add-to-challenges-for-laredo-port/>.

³ "Border Crossing Entry Data | Monthly Data," U.S. Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2025, <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/Tables-Query-Tool/6rt4-smhh>.; "Priority Issues for Nogales 2025," Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority, 2025, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ede7076e90f6613c259a473/t/685b1b643d927c6d1efbe3ec/1750801278528/Nogales+Port+Authority+Top+Issues-2>.

⁴ "Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)," U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, March 6, 2025, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>.

⁵ "Defense Community Infrastructure Program," Department of Defense, 2025, <https://oldcc.gov/our-programs/defense-community-infrastructure-program>.

ENDORSEMENTS

National Treasury Employees Union, Border Trade Alliance, Fresh Produce Association, Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority, the Southern Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Douglas.

SECTION BY SECTION

Section 1: Short Title

Section 2: Definitions

Defines community infrastructure as an umbrella term for projects that directly support an LPOE or the impacted infrastructure of communities within 25 miles of an LPOE, as well as highlights specific types of community infrastructure (projects focused on transportation, wastewater management, electricity, or other utilities).

Section 3: Land Port of Entry Community Infrastructure Program

Authorizes a new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant program that awards funds for community infrastructure projects that are supportive of an LPOE; clarifies that eligible projects will address the direct impacts that LPOEs have on surrounding communities or advance core national objectives in priority areas such as border security and international trade; and requires DHS's evaluation of projects to include the consideration of infrastructure improvements identified by CBP and state governments.

Section 4: Authorization of Appropriations

Authorizes Congress to appropriate funding for the Land Port of Entry Community Infrastructure Program, while also clarifying that DHS's ability to award grants through this program is limited by the year-to-year availability of appropriations.