

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2016

Mr. Kenneth E. Hyatt  
Acting Undersecretary for International Trade  
International Trade Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Herbert Hoover Building, Room 3424  
Fourteenth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Hyatt:

We write to urge the U.S. Department of Commerce and the International Trade Administration (ITA) to increase federal resources available to local and state agencies that facilitate cooperation with Mexico in trade, export and manufacturing. Mexico is our southern neighbor and third largest global trading partner. Improving the capacity of our companies and state and local governments to do business in Mexico is critical to the nation's economic security.

Trade with Mexico is particularly important to New Mexico, and we ask that you improve support for New Mexico's businesses that engage in commerce across the border. The volume of exports from our state has grown over 300 percent since 2005, and Mexico was the largest export market for New Mexico products in 2015. Despite these figures, there are fewer International U.S. Commercial Service Offices in Mexico compared to other countries with a smaller trade volume. There are five International U.S. Commercial Service Offices five in Brazil and seven in India, while there are only three in Mexico. Furthermore, these offices are located in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara leaving a gap in northern Mexico, closest to the border.

In 2014, a report by the Government Accountability Office found that the Department had weaknesses in fulfilling responsibilities to promote exports in collaboration with state and local agencies [GAO-14-393]. The GAO recommended that the ITA improve implementation of Export Outreach Teams, enhance interagency collaboration on export promotion with nonfederal entities, and increase information sharing with state and local trade offices. Just recently, GAO informed us that after two and a half years, these recommendations remain unchanged and will remain open until there are positive outcomes.

We request that the ITA take action to fulfill its mission to help U.S. organizations compete in northern Mexico. First, we support and urge you to meet the GAO's recommendations to increase collaboration on export promotion with nonfederal entities in New Mexico including organizing trade missions. To further this mission, we request that you reestablish the Mexico Business Information Center, staffed by ITA Trade Specialists and discontinued after 2014, which served as an important way for businesses and local governments to receive information on trade with Mexico.

Second, in the long term, we ask that you contribute resources to the establishment of a U.S. Commercial Service Office in the northern Mexico, such as Chihuahua. We recognize that there are important security issues that must be considered when opening a new office, but we firmly believe that the investment will be worth it in order to fully support U.S. companies doing business in these areas.

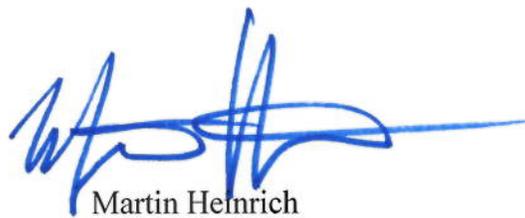
These requests are consistent with New Mexico residents' statewide call for growing the border economy with Mexico. In May 2016, over 200 New Mexico residents came together for a state economic development town hall led by nonpartisan nonprofit New Mexico First. Town hall participants recommended that policymakers and business leaders work together to develop a statewide supply chain program to recruit suppliers to New Mexico, and connect them with industries on the U.S side of the border that export to Mexico. New Mexico state and local government agencies, and local business and industrial associations can be credited for working together to leverage economic growth opportunities along the border, bringing and keeping jobs in New Mexico. With the support of the ITA, they can do more.

Thank you for your all that you do to strengthen the competitiveness of U.S. industry, promote trade and investment, and ensure fair trade. Your work fulfills the goal of the U.S. government to build connections rather than barriers with our international partners.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator