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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CHAMBER-LED DELEGATION CHAMPIONS SAN DIEGO REGION PRIORITIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

*More than 170 business and civic leaders from San Diego region are advocating for infrastructure, trade, healthcare, workforce development, and sustainability*

SAN DIEGO (April 17, 2023) – A group of more than 170 business and civic leaders—the largest to date—from the San Diego region are in Washington, D.C. working to advance issues critical to business growth, the creation of jobs, and the economy. It is the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce’s 15<sup>th</sup> annual “Mission to Washington, D.C.” which brings delegates to the nation’s capital for three days.

"San Diego is about as far as you can get from Washington. It’s important that our representatives and federal agency leaders hear directly from us about the projects and policies that uniquely affect business and the people living and working in the Cali-Baja region," said **Jerry Sanders, President and CEO of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce**. "These annual in-person meetings make a real impact, especially when we have a group of more than 170 delegates from both sides of the border coordinated and aligned in sharing San Diego’s priorities."

"San Diego has taken its rightful seat at the table in the national conversation, which has resulted in more federal resources to tackle the big issues facing our region: homelessness, housing affordability, infrastructure, public safety, binational relations, and climate," said **San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria**. "I’m grateful to the San Diego Regional Chamber for convening business and civic leaders year after year to advocate for our priorities with a unified voice to deliver results for San Diegans."

"Investing in our local community infrastructure and promoting economic prosperity for the binational region are among my top priorities," said **Nora Vargas, Chairwoman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors**. "Leaders at the state and federal level need to know that San Diego County is a beacon for innovation, research, international trade, technology and small businesses, not to mention hosting the largest naval fleet in the world. I’m honored to be an ambassador on this trip for our amazing county, showing national leaders why investing in San Diego is an investment in a prosperous future for all."

"Federal funding is critical for the Port of San Diego to keep goods and supplies moving efficiently, bolster tourism and hospitality, and help ensure our nation’s military readiness," said **Chairman Rafael Castellanos**,

**Port of San Diego Board of Port Commissioners.** “We have critical cargo and cruise terminal electrification and major maintenance projects. However, few federal funding programs are targeted for ports. We look forward to accessing additional infrastructure dollars to advance more projects that will benefit the San Diego region, California, and the country.”

“Caltrans has been proud to steward projects and provide oversight - on behalf of the State of California - on infrastructure and multimodal efforts that benefit the communities we serve, both in San Diego and Imperial County. In working with our partners at the local level, our joint efforts have resulted in significant federal funding to ensure we take our transportation priorities from design to shovels in the dirt,” **said Gustavo Dallarda Caltrans District 11 Director.** “Our region is already benefiting from the INFRA Grant that is moving the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry forward. This binational build will benefit freight *and* families, on both sides of the border.”

A key priority for this year’s trip is advocating for federal funding for regional infrastructure projects. The binational delegation – including San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria and San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chair Nora Vargas – will meet with federal government officials and agency representatives from a variety of departments including the EPA, Department of Transportation, Customs and Border Protection, Department of State, Housing and Urban Development, and several others. The delegation will share priorities around border infrastructure and staffing, coastal resilience, Community Development Block Grant funding, U.S.-Mexico Border Water Infrastructure Program, and many more key regional issues.

Delegates will have the opportunity to meet with the entire San Diego Congressional Delegation, Mexican Ambassador to the United States Esteban Moctezuma, Rep. Adam Schiff, representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, and tour the Pentagon.

In full, the three-day agenda includes meetings covering areas such as infrastructure, transportation, defense and veterans, national security, binational collaboration, education and childcare, and regional workforce development.

Additional key priorities for the delegation include addressing regional progress in

- € healthcare,
- € transportation,
- € housing and urban development,
- € tourism and hospitality,
- € cross-border trade,
- € military and veterans,
- € and energy, water, and sustainability issues.

Delegates will meet with:

- Mexico's Ambassador to the United States, Esteban Moctezuma
- Rep. Adam Schiff (CA-30)
- San Diego Congressional Delegation including Reps. Issa (CA-48), Jacobs (CA-51), Levin (CA-49), Peters (CA-50), and Vargas (CA-52)
- U.S. Senator Chris Coons (DE)
- Lael Brainard, Director the National Economic Council
- Casey Durst, Executive Director, Operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- Jesse Cross-Call, Deputy Director of External Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services



- Zach McRae, Special Policy Advisor, and Alexis M. Pelosi, Senior Advisor for Climate, in the Office of the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Former Congressman Jeff Denham

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Additional notable delegates:

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- € San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Nora Vargas and Vice Chair Terra Lawson-Remer
- € San Diego City Council President Sean Elo-Rivera and Councilmembers Raul Campillo, Joe LaCava, Kent Lee, Marni Von Wilpert, Monica Montgomery Steppe, and Stephen Whitburn
- € Imperial Beach Mayor Paloma Aguirre
- € Solana Beach Mayor Lesa Heebner
- € Ambassador Carlos Gonzales, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego
- € President & CEO of the Port of San Diego, Joe Stuyvesant, and Port Commissioners Castellanos (Chairman) and Michael Zucchet
- € Gustavo Dallarda, Caltrans District 11 Director

[Additional media and b-roll available here.](#)

The San Diego Regional Chamber is the only Chamber to lead annual binational delegation trips to the U.S. and Mexico capital cities. As the largest member-supported business organization in San Diego's binational region, the Chamber serves as the leading voice for the business community and presents a united effort on the community's behalf. The largest local chamber on the West Coast, the San Diego Chamber represents more than 2,000 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs.

**About the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce:** The San Diego Regional Chamber is the hub for connections and collaboration among the regional business community and uses that clout to advocate for public policies and candidates that support economic growth and the creation of jobs for all businesses. As the largest local Chamber on the West Coast, representing more than 2,000 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs, the San Diego Regional Chamber is working to make the San Diego region the best place to live and work. For more information, please visit [SDChamber.org](http://SDChamber.org) or call 619-544-1300.

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