

Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC)

Topic 1: Environment and Water Preservation

Southern Arizona and Mexico share the most diverse desert in the world, the Sonoran Desert. The Sonoran Desert encompasses 120,000 square miles of southern and western Arizona, southeastern California, the Mexican state of Sonora, and most of the Baja Peninsula. In Arizona, the desert runs from west of Nogales on the US–Mexican border north to east of Tucson and Phoenix, and then northwest to near Kingman.

While borders may separate the land in policies, the environment has no borders. Across both sides plant and animal species are being threatened from human development, and water supplies are running low.

The combination of exotic natural areas, year-round warm weather, and little rain has helped fuel an influx of people into Arizona that has increased the state's population by 40 percent since 1990. Pima County now numbers nearly 850,000, a 26-percent increase since 1990. New construction to accommodate a growing Tucson consumes an estimated 6,400 acres of Sonoran Desert a year.

This committee has been task to focus on water management planning and environmental quality issues facing the Arizona-Sonora region, and working on collaborative programs and planning to benefit the quality of life and sustainability in both states. A plan for balancing the conservation and protection of our cultural and natural resource heritage with our efforts to maintain an high economic community must be considered.

Questions to consider:

1. How does population growth impact the environment?
2. How has policing at the border impacted the environment?
3. How should the commission allocate responsibility over areas of the Sonoran Desert, or should the issue be dealt with as a whole?

Topic 2: Education Exchange Opportunities

This committee has been tasked with creating plans that promotes training and research among the cross-border education community, facilitating innovative partnerships that enhance student cultural and academic experiences at universities in Arizona and Sonora.

From promoting student exchange to creating ideas for increasing academic mobility to research and innovation. Creating a framework for how two countries can work together to ensure that a focus on innovation remains at the top of efforts around bilateral policy aimed at creating a region of prosperity is essential.

Initiatives in the past have included, the "100,000 Strong in the Americas" initiative, which aims to increase student mobility between the U.S. and other countries in the Western hemisphere. Also Mexico's "Proyecto 100,000," which seeks to send 100,000 Mexican students to the U.S. and bring 50,000 U.S. students to study in Mexico by 2018.

Another issue facing students across the border is students crossing to attend school. After an increase in family deportations, many mixed-status families with U.S. citizen children find themselves living in the border region so their school children can cross to attend school in the U.S.

Questions to consider:

1. How can exchange opportunities between universities in Arizona and Mexico occur, especially between institutions like the University of Arizona and UNAM?
2. How would increased binational programming affect enrollment and retention of students?
3. What education rights should U.S. citizen children living in Mexico have?

Topic 3: Transportation, Infrastructure, and Ports

This committee has been tasked with creating plans that allow cross-border collaboration on infrastructure plans and projects at Arizona's ports of entry and safer and more efficient transportation infrastructure in the region. This includes the maintenance of the I-19 highway, other binational highways, border and agriculture checkpoints, and other infrastructures. The lack of staff and investment in technology and modernization of the ports of entry has led to longer waiting times during crossings, which ultimately hurts businesses and tourism. About 85 percent of merchandise value traded between the U.S. and Mexico is transported by trucks. An impressive number of trucks cross the border on daily basis, in 2017, on average trucks made more than 16,500 northbound crossings from Mexico to the U.S. Only northbound crossings are accounted for making this number likely much higher. Six of the 29 commercial land crossings between the U.S. and Mexico are in Arizona. Due to the high use and under-maintained infrastructure along the border industries are being hurt.

Questions to consider:

1. Who is responsible for maintenance on binational infrastructure?
2. Is there a need for balance between modernization and staffing infrastructure/ports of entry and enforcement mechanisms?
3. What industries will be impacted in there was better transport, infrastructure, and ports?