



STATEMENT BY THE GREAT LAKES METRO CHAMBER COALITION

Date: January 9, 2012

Subject: Request for Public Comments Concerning U.S.-Canada Action Plan for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness

The Great Lakes Metro Coalition is composed of 30 chambers of commerce representing more than 150,000 businesses and 1 million jobs in the Great Lakes trading area. The Coalition is dedicated to forging a strategic partnership between the Great Lakes economic region and the federal government that will leverage the region's historic strengths in manufacturing, research and innovation to produce a consistently high performing economy.

That vision will become a reality if barriers in the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world come down. U.S.-Canadian merchandise trade is estimated to be about \$600 billion in 2011, and the lion's share of that trade flows through the Great Lakes border crossings and ports. Manufactured goods dominate those movements, making the region's highly-integrated supply chain systems not only the envy of the world, but absolutely critical to our region's future.

We commend the Obama and Harper administrations for the forward thinking processes established in the Border Action Plan and the Regulatory Cooperation Council. Both are essential to the future of the North American trading bloc. The steps laid out in these initiatives represent a dramatic progression to economic security and therefore national security. We also are encouraged that the work of both groups represents the input of so many stakeholders on the front lines of production and trade.

The many supply chain and transportation measures within the Border Action Plan are of paramount importance for more seamless flow of travelers and cargoes. In particular, we applaud the provisions which emphasize harmonization, simplification, standardization, communication and cooperation.

Meeting the established timelines will be an important signal to shippers, carriers, and travelers in both countries that these milestones will be reached. We urge both governments to provide the necessary priority and resources to make the plan a reality.

We also applaud the references to local engagement and flexibility. Conditions at each of the crossing points are different, needs are different, and the security response must be designed accordingly within the overall of the two federal governments.

The Coalition stands ready to assist in the implementation of these important steps in both the Border Action Plan and the Regulatory Cooperation Council. We encourage you to make these processes a top priority of both governments.



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