



"Serving Western Legislatures"

RESOLUTION 98-8

Maintaining the Free Flow of People and Goods Across the United States Border

Introduced by the Trade and Transportation Committee

WHEREAS, the United States and Canada share the longest undefended border in the world and have the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world with over 125 million crossings by U.S. and Canadian citizens at the border each year, many at land borders; and

WHEREAS, implementation of Section 110 of the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* (IIRIRA) passed by the U.S. Congress in 1996 requires the Attorney General to develop and implement an automated entry-exit control system to register "all aliens" entering and departing the United States, including Canadians; and

WHEREAS, Western states support increased trade with Canada and Mexico in the post NAFTA era, but also believe firmly in maintaining the employment, safety and environmental standards required by that agreement;

WHEREAS, strong and important ties link the United States with our land border neighbors, as reflected in trade which exceeds \$430 billion annually and in tens of millions of border crossing for business and tourism; and

WHEREAS, such a system will unnecessarily cause unreasonably long delays at the border, thereby seriously impeding trade, hindering tourism, and adversely affecting the economies of the 13-state region and four Pacific Island Territories of the CSG-WEST, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate recently unanimously passed a Senate substitute amendment to S. 1360, which would prevent the legislation from going into effect at land borders and sea ports; and

WHEREAS, the transportation infrastructure in the West is vital to international trade and tourism and is uniquely affected by the vast distances between urban areas, by large amounts of public land and by poor transportation conditions on many Indian reservations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the CSG-WEST (Council of State Governments-WEST, Serving Western Legislatures) strongly supports S. 1360, the *Border Improvement and Immigration Act of 1997*, and urges the U. S. House of Representatives expeditiously to pass the Senate-passed legislation, which was sent to the House as a Senate Amendment to H.R. 2920; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CSG-WEST urges its members to immediately contact their Congressional delegations to encourage their support of H.R. 2920 with the Senate Amendment, and endorses transmitting this policy position to the leadership of the U.S. Congress and the appropriate members of the U. S. Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that U.S. trade authorities be urged to enforce safety, labor, environment and other side agreements of NAFTA and provide evidence of that enforcement.

*ADOPTED BY THE CSG-WEST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1998
ASSEMBLED IN ANNUAL MEETING IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA.*