

BORDER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Title I. NAME

Section 1

The name of this program shall be the Border Legislative Conference (BLC).

Title II. OBJECTIVE

Section 2

The objective of the Border Legislative Conference shall be to foster ongoing dialogue and collaboration among state legislators of the United States and Mexico border region. This will be achieved through joint consideration of common problems, exchange of information and, where desirable, the development of joint programs, to the end that border communities and state governments on both sides of the border may be strengthened and improved.

Title III. COMPOSITION

Section 3

The Border Legislative Conference shall consist of state legislators from the border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas in the United States, and the states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas in the Republic of Mexico.

Section 4

The legislative leadership or appropriate legislative authority from participating border states shall determine their state's membership in the Border Legislative Conference. The number of members appointed may be selected by each state with no limit.

Section 5

Membership may, upon the approval of the Border Legislative Conference members, be expanded to include non-border states from both the United States and Mexico. Affiliate status may be discretionarily conferred to non-border states by consensus of the Border Legislative Conference participants, herein referred to as "affiliate members."

Section 6

Subject to the provisions and limitations of these rules, affiliate members shall be accorded such rights and privileges as may be determined by the Border Legislative Conference membership.

Title IV. PARTICIPATION

Section 7

Voting privileges at Border Legislative Conference forums are reserved only for state legislators representing U.S.-Mexico border states.

Title V. OFFICERS

Section 8

The officers of the Border Legislative Conference shall include a chair and a vice chair who shall be member state legislators.

Section 9

The officers shall be elected by the general membership at the annual meeting.

Section 10

The chair and vice chair positions shall rotate between U.S. and Mexico border states. Newly elected officers shall assume their duties at the first forum of the calendar year.

Section 11

All elected officers shall serve for a period of one year as vice chair and one year as chair.

Section 12

Succession of the vice chair to the position of chair shall occur upon the end of the chair's one-year tenure. In the event that an officer's service as an elected legislator from a member state should end before the term of officer, the position shall be deemed vacant.

Section 13

In the event that the position of chair is vacated for any reason, the vice chair shall succeed to the chair for the remainder of the term.

Section 14

In the event that the position of vice chair is vacated for any reason, the chair, in consultation with the appropriate legislative leadership or appropriate legislative authority in the member states represented by the outgoing vice chair, shall appoint a successor who will serve for the remainder of the term.

Title VI. OFFICERS: RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

Section 15

The chair shall preside at all forums of the Border Legislative Conference, present annual work plan, and shall perform such other duties as may be required by these rules.

Section 16

The vice chair shall serve as presiding officer in the absence of the chair and shall perform such other duties as may be required by these rules.

Section 17

The chair and the vice chair, with the assistance of program staff, supervise the planning and execution of all Border Legislative Conference forums and task forces provided for in these rules.

Section 18

The chair makes final approval of all general forum matters.

Section 19

The officers of the Border Legislative Conference shall also serve as “Associate Members” of the CSG-*WEST* Executive Committee.

Title VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Section 20

The responsibilities of members include, but are not limited to, representing their respective state legislative bodies in Border Legislative Conference meetings, casting votes on program matters, submitting proposals for the membership’s consideration, supporting decisions by the membership, and advocating, educating and informing others of the program. Failure to participate in two consecutive meetings will constitute notification of absences to the respective member’s state leadership who assigned that legislator.

Title VIII. FORUMS

Section 21

Border Legislative Conference forums shall be conducted at least once during a calendar year and at such other times as the chair, in consultation with staff and the membership of the Border Legislative Conference, may determine.

Section 22

The forums shall rotate between U.S. and Mexico member states, with preference given to the states of the chair and vice chairs, respectively. The dates and locations of forums shall be determined by the chair, vice chair, and staff, in consultation with the membership of the Border Legislative Conference.

Section 23

The Border Legislative Conference may also sponsor periodic regional issue conferences, the focus and frequency of which shall be determined by the officers. Each regional issue conference shall be chaired by a lead legislator or legislators, who shall be appointed by the chair.

Section 24

Unless restricted by an action of the Border Legislative Conference membership, participation in forum activities shall be open to all elected and appointed federal, state, and local government officials, their staffs, affiliate members, the media, representatives of the private sector and other invited guests.

Title IX. RELATIONS BETWEEN PARTICIPATING STATES

Section 25

The relations between the United States and Mexico member states are based on equality, dignity, and respect for the sovereignty of both nations in a spirit of cooperation.

Title X. TASK FORCES

Section 26

The membership of the Border Legislative Conference may, from time to time, establish task forces in substantive areas of continuing interest to the member states and affiliate members.

Section 27

The purposes and responsibilities of such task forces shall be defined and revised as necessary by the chair of the Border Legislative Conference.

Section 28

The co-chairs and members of task forces shall be determined by the chair and vice chair of the Border Legislative Conference, in consultation with the appropriate legislative authorities representing the member states and affiliate members.

Section 29

Unless otherwise restricted by the membership of the Border Legislative Conference, taskforce membership shall be open to legislators, legislative staff, other elected or appointed officials, and private sector representatives from the member states and affiliate members. The chairs shall be state legislators, one from a Mexico state and the other from a U.S. state.

Section 30

All task forces shall report to the Border Legislative Conference membership at such times as may be determined by the chair.

Section 31

Any policy position recommendations generated by a task force are subject to the approval of the membership of the Border Legislative Conference and, as appropriate, to prior review by other entities authorized herein.

Section 32

All task forces created pursuant to this rule are subject to dissolution at any time by the chair.

Title XI. POLICY POSITIONS

Section 33

Any resolution or statement of any kind that purports to be the policy of the Border Legislative Conference shall be adopted by the membership as a whole during a membership forum in accordance with the voting guidelines articulated in Title XII. Prior to such approval, policy recommendations by any task force are to be considered only recommendations of the task force and not an official position of the Border Legislative Conference.

Section 34

Policy positions or resolutions may be proposed by any individual legislator or group of legislators from one or more of the member states.

Section 35

Before a proposed policy position or resolution may be considered by the Border Legislative Conference membership, it must first be approved for consideration by the chair and vice chair.

Section 36

Proposed policy positions or resolutions not previously reviewed as provided herein may be considered only by unanimous consent of the members.

Section 37

Policy position and resolution proposals are deemed properly submitted for preliminary review for membership consideration when they are received by program staff two weeks in advance of a scheduled forum.

Section 38

Participating members shall notify and inform their respective legislatures of any policy positions or declarations taken by the Border Legislative Conference.

Title XII. VOTING

Section 39

Members of the Border Legislative Conference shall first attempt to reach a consensus by voice vote of the eligible voters present for purposes of decision-making on all motions, resolutions, or other business of the Border Legislative Conference, and any task force. If consensus is not achieved, the members of the Border Legislative Conference shall adopt its decisions by majority vote, representing a majority of U.S. border states (3) and a majority of Mexico border states (4).

Section 40

States may vote in favor, against or by means of abstention. If a vote results in a tie, a second vote shall be taken. If a second vote results in a tie, the matter fails for lack of a majority.

Section 41

Affiliate members and other duly appointed, nonlegislative members of such task forces or entities shall be considered nonvoting members.

Section 42

A roll call vote may be requested by any voting member.

Title XIII. ADMINISTRATION

Section 43

The Border Legislative Conference is jointly administered by The Council of State Governments (CSG) -*WEST* and the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) of The Council of State Governments.

Section 44

Program staff consists of a program manager, a bilingual staff assistant and support staff from CSG's Western, Southern and Washington, D.C. offices that oversee the program, organize forums and serve as the administrative arms of the officers and members of the Border Legislative Conference in carrying out the mission of the program.

Section 45

The duties of program staff may include, but are not limited to:

- Executing decisions made by the membership
- Representing the Border Legislative Conference before private and public organizations
- Developing relationships with cross border organizations
- Coordinating communications among participating members and member states
- Strategic planning of forums
- Programming budget oversight and maintaining records of meetings, minutes and official communications
- Screening of conference resolutions and the development of policy recommendations and programs.
- Reporting activities to the membership, and other administrative duties as determined by the officers.

Section 46

The program is headquartered in Sacramento, California.

Section 47

Any recommendation generated by program staff is subject to the approval of the chair and vice chair, or when appropriate, by the membership of the Border Legislative Conference.

Title XIV. RULES: ADOPTION, AMENDMENT, REPEAL, AND SUSPENSION

Section 48

The Organizational Framework of the Border Legislative Conference may be adopted, amended, or repealed at any Border Legislative Conference forum by a two-thirds vote of all member states present and voting. These rules shall not be suspended at any time, except by unanimous consent of the membership.