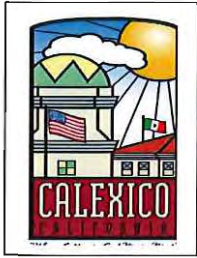


**AGENDA  
ITEM**

**12**



# AGENDA STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** October 6, 2021

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**APPROVED BY:** Miguel Figueroa, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Miguel Figueroa, City Manager *MF*

**SUBJECT:** Approve Letter Requesting Modification to Hours of Operation at Calexico East Port of Entry

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**Recommendation:**

Approve letter to modify hours of operation at Calexico East Port of Entry. Letter is addressed to Senator Diane Feinstein, Senator Alex Padilla, and Congressman Juan Vargas.

**Background:**

The Calexico East Port of Entry hours of operation for passenger border crossing were significantly scaled back early last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The continued closure of vehicular traffic at the port at 2:00 p.m. each day is causing horrendous traffic conditions in the City of Calexico, specifically on major roadways like State Highway 98, Imperial Avenue (State Highway 111) and Cesar Chavez Boulevard.

**Discussion:**

If this problem is not addressed, traffic congestion will continue to negatively impact the quality of life for our residents and visitors in several ways. The lack of border-crossing capacity caused by the continued closure of the Calexico East Port of Entry is taking a toll on our city and region.

**Attachment:**

- Letter from City of Calexico City Council

<p><b>AGENDA ITEM</b></p> <p><i>12</i></p>
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# City of Calexico

## City Council

608 HEBER AVENUE

• CALEXICO, CA 92231

• (760) 768-2110

October 6, 2021

The Honorable Diana Feinstein  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
2244 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: URGENT REQUEST to Modify the Hours of Operation at the Calexico East Land Port of Entry

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Padilla and Congressman Vargas:

The City of Calexico City Council is requesting that you take immediate action to seek the full reopening of the Calexico East Land Port of Entry (LPOE). Specifically, I urge you to seek an emergency meeting with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials in the interest of securing a commitment that will allow the port to return to normal operations. The City of Calexico City Council is prepared to join you in this urgently needed discussion.

As you are aware, the Calexico East LPOE hours of operation for passenger border crossing were significantly scaled back early last year in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Predictably, the continued closure of vehicular traffic at the port at 2:00 p.m. each day is causing horrendous traffic conditions at the neighboring Calexico West LPOE. In fact, traffic congestion between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and between 2:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. every Friday effectively divides the City of Calexico in two, with commute times of 30-45 minutes is the new "normal" when traveling from the east to the west side of the city. Moreover, EMS personnel responding to any emergency situation west of Highway 111 (Imperial Avenue) are unable to arrive on scene in a timely fashion, putting our citizens at extreme risk.

Further exacerbating the situation, the operational efficiency at the Calexico West LPOE continues to be degraded as a result of ongoing GSA construction activities at the port, which has created a bottleneck in the existing vehicle inspection lanes. Recently installed speed bumps have made bottleneck worse while construction widening enhancements on Highway 98 (Birch Street in Calexico) has further complicated traffic flows for vehicles traveling East-West as well as North-South.

As you know, traffic congestion continues to negatively impact the quality of life for our shared constituents in a number of significant ways. From degraded air quality to degraded economic productivity to increased incidents of road rage, the lack of border-crossing capacity caused by the continued closure of the Calexico East LPOE is taking its toll on our region and is completely unacceptable.

While the onset of the Covid-19 public health emergency was the justifiable rationale behind the initial operational changes at Calexico East, it no longer stands reason that the port should continue to operate at reduced capacity. As you are likely aware, Imperial County has one of the best vaccination rates in California – 94 percent of our eligible population has been vaccinated with at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine. 77.2 percent of our eligible population is fully vaccinated. Additionally, the decline in Covid-19 caseloads in our region should allow us to re-evaluate and adjust accordingly. It is also important to note that numerous other border ports are not currently subject to modified operational schedules. Calexico East should be no different.

Again, we urge you to seek a meeting with CBP and to ensure that the current hours of operation for the Calexico East LPOE are expanded to improve the congestion and delays that occur at the Calexico West LPOE. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact our City Manager, Miguel Figueroa [mfigueroa@calexico.ca.gov](mailto:mfigueroa@calexico.ca.gov) at (760)768-2110 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Javier Moreno  
Mayor

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Camilo Garcia  
Mayor ProTem

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Rosie Fernandez-Arreola  
Council Member

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Gloria Romo  
Council Member

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Raul Ureña  
Council Member

Cc: The Honorable Ben Hueso, California State Senate  
The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, California State Assembly