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Regional Stakeholders Discuss Opportunities for New Approaches at the US-CAN Border

SEATTLE - Cross-border stakeholders from across the Pacific Northwest met to discuss new innovation and technology at the land, marine, and rail ports of entry on the northern border. Several ports of entry on the WA-BC border are poised to become the first participants in the newly adopted Land, Marine, Rail and Air Agreement on preclearance between the US and Canada. The new processes scheduled for adoption by US CBP will clear passengers in Canada prior to departure by ferry in Victoria and rail in Vancouver. This new approach will improve security and speed processing of passengers by eliminating wait times when arriving in the United States.

Stakeholders also discussed a proposed new pilot focused on reducing wait times for commercial freight transport on the land border at the Pacific Highway border crossing. The proposed pilot is modeled after the successful program in the Buffalo-Niagara region called Pre-Arrival Readiness Evaluation (PARE) program. PARE is an automated traffic management system for commercial vehicles departing Canada to optimize traffic flow. The program works with CBP to exchange information of commercial vehicles to determine if commercial fees have been paid and travel documentation has been properly filed before reaching the CBP booth at the border. This will greatly speed the processing time for each truck and driver and, in turn, will reduce wait times.

Also discussed was confusion by stakeholders regarding the many trusted traveller programs adopted by the United States and when and where each can be used. It was pointed out that NEXUS, Global Entry, and Sentri often overlap and provide similar benefits but are not interchangeable in many instances, and each is offered at a different price. Stakeholders recommended that CBP work to help travellers better understand what program is acceptable at the land border and in airports and potentially harmonize the benefits of all of the cards. It was pointed out that NEXUS and Global Entry can be used at the land border coming from Canada; however Global Entry cannot be used to enter Canada. Likewise, NEXUS cannot be used when flying to the US from countries other than Canada.

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ABOUT PNWER

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit organization created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon. PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region; identify and promote "models of success; and serve as a conduit to exchange information.