

Recommendation 25

Given the critical need for new infrastructure at key Canada-US border locations, the Government of Canada should accelerate its efforts to construct such infrastructure at existing border points and more actively encourage its American counterparts to do the same.

The Government recognizes the critical role that border infrastructure plays for the Canadian economy. The Government is working with key partners to implement several new initiatives and accelerate existing programs to reduce border congestion by expanding infrastructure and the use of technologies such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). These steps support the objectives of the December 2001 Canada-US Smart Border Action Plan.

Through the Border Infrastructure Fund, announced in 2001, the Government will directly provide \$600 million over five years, to be matched by contributions from the provinces and other partners, resulting in at least \$1.2 billion in total improvements to Canada's border infrastructure. This is in addition to the \$65 million set aside under the Government's Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program.

Given that 70 percent of Canada's border truck traffic moves over six crossing points, the majority of the Fund will be dedicated to improvements at: Windsor, Sarnia, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie in Ontario; Douglas, British Columbia; and Lacolle, Quebec. The Government and the provinces have recently announced several new initiatives, including: \$75.2 million for the Lacolle crossing and the highway leading to it; \$243 million for the British Columbia Lower Mainland; and \$10 million for Saskatchewan.

The Federal and Ontario Governments are working closely to address border congestion at the Windsor Gateway. As a first step, in July 2002, the two governments announced they would contribute \$880,000 for short-term traffic management improvements. The Prime Minister and Premier of Ontario have also announced a joint contribution of \$300 million to upgrade existing infrastructure. In addition, the Federal and Ontario Governments are exploring ways to accelerate the ongoing study being conducted by the Canada-US-Ontario-Michigan Bi-National Partnership to identify and address long term solutions to increase Windsor-Detroit border capacity.

Canadian and American officials meet regularly to discuss their respective needs and priorities for border infrastructure improvements. Also, Canada and the US have established the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) to enhance bi-national planning on border infrastructure matters. The TBWG consists of national, provincial/territorial and state transportation departments along with other interested

