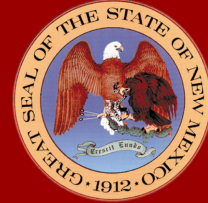




STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



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Governor Bill Richardson, Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman Announce Expanded Commercial Hours for Santa Teresa Border Crossing

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today received a letter from US Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff approving New Mexico’s request to permanently expand the commercial crossing hours for the Santa Teresa Port of Entry.

Secretary Chertoff’s letter states that the US government reached an agreement with the Government of Mexico to extend the commercial crossing hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the week. Governor Richardson and US Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman had joined together in pushing for the expanded hours.

“The additional commercial border crossing hours in Santa Teresa will benefit both countries and means millions of dollars in increased trade and new jobs,” said Governor Richardson. “I am grateful to Senators Domenici and Bingaman for their help in making this happen, and it is a great example of how we can work together in the best interests of New Mexico.”

“A permanent extension is a big deal, and should be considered another step forward in the importance of the Santa Teresa crossing. There is every indication that the Santa Teresa region will grow and I expect that the operations of the port of entry will be expanded as development and trade intensify,” said Senator Pete V. Domenici, who has supported the border crossing as a member of the Homeland Security authorizing and funding committees in the Senate.

“Expanding port hours has helped New Mexico increase bilateral trade, which has had a positive economic impact on our state’s border communities. I’m very pleased that these new hours are being made permanent and I look forward to working on other efforts to improve our ports of entry,” Senator Jeff Bingaman said.

Commercial crossing hours at Santa Teresa had been scheduled from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. A pilot program ran from September 3, 2007 through February 29, 2008, extending

commercial hours until 10 p.m. During that period commercial crossings at Santa Teresa set records and increased by an average of 30%- historically the highest volumes since the port was opened. This increase in commercial traffic occurred during what has traditionally been a slow period of the year at Santa Teresa. Weekend commercial hours will remain 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

“This expansion is a great first step and allows us to build on the success we have seen so far,” added Governor Richardson. “We’ll continue to monitor the traffic and if, as expected, the volume continues to increase we will push for additional expansion of the hours.”

A PDF of Secretary Chertoff’s letter to Governor Richardson is attached.

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