

November 18, 2014

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President/CEO
Lea Márquez Peterson, MBA

Honorable Sharon Bronson, Chair

Pima County Board of Supervisors

130 W. Congress, 11th Floor

Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Madam Chair,

(I am providing my comments in written format in the event that I am not able to be present during the Call to the Audience.)

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. Our Tucson Hispanic Chamber represents over 1100 member businesses located throughout Southern Arizona and supports the business community in the bilingual, bi-cultural region of the Arizona-Sonora Border.

I am attending the Pima County Board of Supervisor's meeting today to express our member's concerns with the state of our roads in our County. The condition of our roads are worse now than they have ever been and are top of mind for our entire community. Pima County's Comprehensive Plan, Pima Prospects has a glaring lack of data in the document on the state of our roads and the financial impact such disrepair has on our businesses. This relates specifically to Point 6.3 of the Economic Development portion which stresses "Creating a Positive Climate for our Businesses". Each of the goals listed are valuable, but the overwhelming negative reality of the state of roads in Pima County overshadow many of the good programs you are working on.

Many of our chamber's members own fleets of trucks – from Electrician companies, and Contractors to HVAC businesses. Many have commented on the additional wear and tear on their vehicles which one member described as an additional "tax" on his business to operate in Pima County. Our members are replacing tires more frequently and have seen increased automotive repair bills due to the potholes and state of our roads in the County. In addition, they are concerned with the safety of their drivers on our roads.

A solution to our transportation challenges should include input from our diverse business community. I appreciate Mr Huckleberry meeting with our Hispanic

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Chamber members recently to discuss transportation funding options. While I am not here today to endorse a specific funding model, I believe there is an appetite in our business community for a new or increased revenue stream for transportation. I have participated in conversations with business owners where gasoline tax increases, an electric vehicle tax, an increased tire tax and other models were debated.

Mr Huckelberry's memo from August 1, 2014 clearly outlined the financial challenges faced by Pima County and identified several funding mechanisms. I respectfully request that as the Board identifies potential revenue streams, coordination and collaboration is sought with the other jurisdictions so there is not an undue burden on our business community. Many of our businesses are slowly recovering from the economic recession and cannot afford a spike in expenses brought on by additional fees and taxes especially from multiple jurisdictions. I believe a balanced approach with business community input would be valuable.

Funds for road repair and maintenance should be a high priority in the County's budget and not left to monies that are remaining from other projects. To truly focus on the economic recovery of our County, our business community needs safe, properly paved roads to operate on and to attract new business.

Members of our Hispanic Chamber of Commerce are available to provide examples and feedback to the Board and Staff. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lea Márquez - Peterson

Lea Márquez Peterson, MBA, IOM
President/CEO
Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Supervisor Ally Miller
Supervisor Ramon Valadez
Supervisor Ray Carroll
Supervisor Richard Elias
County Administrator Huckelberry

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