

Chilean Ambassador Emphasizes Suitability of Chile for Trade

Chilean Ambassador Felipe Bulnes gave an overview on California and U.S.-Chilean trade relations and opportunities at the California Chamber of Commerce International Luncheon Forum on April 12.

Presentation

The ambassador's slide presentation highlighted facts on the suitability of Chile as an ideal trading partner, titled "Chile Open for Business." In it, Ambassador Bulnes pointed out that Chile:

- has had steady economic growth in the last 20 years, averaging a 5% growth in gross domestic product (GDP) each year;
- is considered by several sources as the No. 1 most attractive country in which to invest in Latin America;
- is the fifth least corrupt country in the world, with high levels of transparency; and
- is ranked seventh on The Heritage Foundation's 2012 Economic Freedom Index.



Ambassador Felipe Bulnes

Ambassador Bulnes added that Chile is currently seeking taxation agreements to complement its free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States. In 2010, both countries signed double taxation agreements and the treaty is in the process of being ratified by both nations, he said.

Trade Relations

Since the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement was implemented in January 2004, bilateral trade between Chile and the United States has doubled.

Chile is home to 17 million people and renowned copper mines. The country has the most stable and fastest-growing economy in its region.

Chile is California's 22nd largest export market. California exports to Chile total about \$1.48 billion and include petroleum and coal products, computer and electronic products, machinery and transportation equipment. California imports of \$967 million from Chile include fresh fruits, forestry products, wines and seafood.

More Information

More information, including a video of Ambassador Bulnes' remarks and PowerPoint presentation, is available at www.calchamber.com/chile.

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Job Creator Bill Unanimously Passes Assembly Committee



A California Chamber of Commerce-supported "job creator" bill that

encourages international trade and tourism unanimously passed an Assembly policy committee this week.

AB 2113 (Hueso; D-San Diego) authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue enhanced driver licenses (EDL) to U.S. citizens to expedite legal traffic and reduce congestion at ports of entry along the California-Mexico border.

This bill is a part of CalChamber's 2012 Renew Agenda and will help position California for economic recovery.

The ports of entry along the California-Mexico border are among the busiest in the world. Each year, 45 million vehicle passengers cross the border via one of the six ports of entry. At San Ysidro Port, 50,000 vehicles are pro-

cessed by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) each day.

The average wait for travelers at these ports is more than an hour. These delays result in a loss of 8 million trips each year. In the San Diego region alone, the result is an estimated loss of \$1.2 billion in revenues.

Relieving Border Congestion

AB 2113 relieves the border congestion by implementing the federal EDL program. This program permits U.S. citizens who possess an EDL access to "ready lanes" at California ports of entry.

An EDL is a standard driver license that has been enhanced in process, technology and security to denote identity and citizenship for purposes of entering the United States. This technology provides CBP real-time access to a traveler's biometric and biographical information, allowing the CBP officer to quickly look at the results and focus on the traveler's vehicle as opposed to scanning documents—reducing wait time by up to 60%.

As California fights its way out of the recession, it is essential to enact legislation that promotes economic growth. Reducing border wait times will allow greater movement of travelers and consumers and would achieve significant economic benefits.

Key Vote

AB 2113 passed the Assembly Transportation Committee with bipartisan support on April 16, 13-0.

Ayes: Achadjian (R-San Luis Obispo), Blumenfield (D-San Fernando Valley), Bonilla (D-Concord), Buchanan (D-Alamo), Eng (D-Monterey Park), Galgiani (D-Livingston), Jeffries (R-Lake Elsinore), Ma (D-San Francisco), B. Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), Miller (R-Corona), Norby (R-Fullerton), Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge), Solorio (D-Anaheim).

Absent/abstaining/not voting: Logue (R-Linda).

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