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Extending the CABC Member Network into Sonora and Mexico

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For 24 years, the Canada Arizona Business Council (CABC) has built its member driven organization around one deep and productive bilateral relationship between Canada and Arizona. That remains the foundation and primary mandate of the CABC. Our Project North America committee is a natural extension of that relationship, created exclusively to support CABC members whose businesses have existing or emerging needs involving Sonora or Mexico. It does not change the CABC's mandate, it expands the markets and relationships available to members when their business requirements naturally extend beyond Canada and Arizona.

The reason for this extension is straightforward. CABC members increasingly operate within a North American economy where markets, customers, suppliers, manufacturing, investment,

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capital and strategic relationships cross North American borders. Many CABC members are already operating in, investing in, supplying, sourcing from or maintaining relationships in Sonora and greater Mexico. For these companies, the Arizona market is not isolated from the markets immediately to the south, just as Canadian companies operating in Arizona may have customers, suppliers, partners or investment opportunities elsewhere in North America. The Project North America committee provides a way for the CABC to support those existing business realities in either direction.

The focus is therefore on markets rather than geography alone. A CABC member may need access to a new customer market, in Sonora or Mexico. Conversely, an Arizona or Mexican company may need a market opportunity in Canada. The value is the ability to connect those requirements to the relationships already contained within the CABC network.

Arizona and Sonora provide a particularly natural extension because they already function as interconnected regional markets. Their relationship has been developed over decades. Organizations such as the Arizona-Mexico Commission, chambers, universities, financial institutions and business organizations have established significant connections across the border. The CABC does not need to recreate this infrastructure. Its role is to connect those established relationships to its Canada-Arizona network through its affiliate members, thus creating value for a CABC member.

This approach is increasingly important as companies consider how to position themselves within North American markets. We are encouraging companies to look at the continent as an interconnected commercial environment via the north south market with Arizona at the center. Canada brings capital, technology, expertise and established corporate relationships. Arizona provides a major U.S. market and growing industrial base, especially in the semiconductor space, and Sonora/Mexico provides additional manufacturing, resource, consumer and investment opportunities. For some CABC members, these markets are already interconnected through their own operations; for others, they are under consideration.

The continuing discussion surrounding USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC, tariffs, and North American trade policy makes this regional perspective particularly relevant. National governments will continue to negotiate trade rules and address political and economic differences. The CABC has a different role. It operates in the private-sector at a U.S. subnational level regardless of the national policy environment. That gives CABC members another practical way to pursue those opportunities while remaining outside national trade and political negotiations to the best of their abilities. Investment money knows no borders or tariffs, thus opportunity.

For the Canadian Government, this should be viewed as a strengthening of Canada's economic relationship with Arizona. Canadian companies already operating in Arizona may naturally need access to Sonora/Mexico as part of their North American strategy. Helping those companies reach these markets can reinforce their Arizona presence while creating opportunities for Canadian capital, technology, products, and expertise.

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For Arizona, the opportunity is equally positive. Canadian companies and investors already contribute to Arizona's economy, and many have activities that extend into Mexico. By helping CABC members further access Sonora and Mexico when appropriate, the Council can strengthen Arizona's position as a gateway between Canada and Sonora/Mexico opportunities. Arizona companies can also benefit by gaining access to Canadian relationships when their own market strategies extend north or south via Arizona.

The CABC's existing structure is well suited to this role. Fourteen committees bring approximately 140 members together across water, mining, medical, energy, manufacturing, aerospace, infrastructure and other strategic sectors. The Council is also associated with approximately 25 affiliate organizations, while its Board of Advisors are all from Canada, Arizona, and Mexico.

For members, Project North America is part of the CABC, rather than a new initiative they are required to adopt. There is no separate membership category, no separate organization and no obligation to participate in Mexico-related activities. Members continue to participate in the CABC because of the Canada–Arizona relationship and the quality of its senior-level network. Project North America simply adds another market dimension when a member needs it.

This broader message is one of continuity and opportunity. The CABC is not choosing Mexico over Canada or Arizona, nor is it creating a competing Canada–Mexico organization. It is recognizing that its members increasingly see North America as a collection of connected markets. By continuing to expand the CABC network into Sonora and Mexico when members need it, the Council can help Canadian and Arizona businesses reach additional markets, capital, and opportunities while strengthening the regional economic relationships that have been at the heart of the CABC.