

## 4. POLICY POSITION

### THE FREE FLOW OF PEOPLE AND GOODS ACROSS THE U.S./CANADA BORDER

#### BACKGROUND

The United States and Canada share the longest undefended border in the world and have the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world with over 125 million crossings by U.S. and Canadian citizens at the border each year, many at land borders. Implementation of Section 110 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) passed by Congress in 1996 requires the attorney general to develop and implement an automated entry-exit control system to register "all aliens" entering and departing the United States, including Canadians. Such a system will unnecessarily cause unreasonably long delays at the border, thereby seriously impeding trade, hindering tourism, and adversely affecting the economies of the 16-state region of the Southern Legislative Conference. The U. S. Senate recently *unanimously* passed a substitute amendment to S. 1360, which would prevent the legislation from going into effect at land borders and sea ports.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments strongly supports S. 1360 and urges the U. S. House of Representatives expeditiously to pass the Senate-passed legislation, which was sent to the House as a Senate Amendment to H.R. 2920. Further, the Southern Legislative Conference urges its members to contact their Congressional delegations to encourage their support of H. R. 2920 with the Senate Amendment, and endorses transmitting this Policy Position to the leadership of the U. S. Congress and the appropriate members of Congress.

Adopted by the Economic Development, Transportation and Cultural Affairs Committee, August 10, 1998, Charleston, South Carolina. Sponsored by Senator Jennie Forehand, Maryland.