

Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America: SuperCorridors Linking Mexico, the U.S. and Canada

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West Coast Corridor Interstate 5 from Vancouver, BC Canada to Baja, California

What is the SPP? In 2005, the SPP was created without debate in Congress or public scrutiny when President Bush met with President Fox of Mexico and Prime Minister Martin of Canada in Waco, Texas where they shook hands on the deal.

- The SPP vision of prosperity is “endless more” sweat-shop produced goods from Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere carried by SuperCargo ships docking at SuperPorts and moved along privatized transportation corridors to Inland “dry” Ports for warehousing and distribution.
- The SPP vision promotes plunder of the world’s diminishing natural resources, along with those of the three SPP countries – such as oil from Alaska and the Canadian tar sands of Alberta, natural gas from the Montana/Wyoming Powder River Basin, coal from West Virginia, timber from the Northwest, and minerals from southern Mexico – all sold worldwide to the highest bidder.

North American SuperCorridors and SuperPorts

Efficient, secure movement of goods and natural resources is key to “prosperity.” Two of the 10 “Prosperity” Working Groups are “Transportation” and “Movement of Goods.” The Transportation Working Group, including the US Department of Transportation, is tasked with creating a vast network of at least 6 north-south SuperCorridors linking coastal and inland SuperPorts (white dots on map) to the existing and improved east-west Interstate highway system.

The **West Coast Corridor** is about 1,500 miles long and follows Interstate 5. It includes the “Cascadia Corridor” from Vancouver, BC through Washington to Eugene, Oregon and continues through California to the Mexican border at Baja (Encinada). It is linked to the “North to Alaska” Corridor and at Los Angeles and San Diego to Interstate 10 to the CANAMEX Corridor and to the SuperPorts along Mexico’s west coast.

■ The **West Coast Corridor Coalition (WCCC)** of the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon and California was launched in June 2003 at the 1st General Session meeting in Sacramento, CA. It includes three of the nation’s fastest growing and economically vital mega regions – the Pacific Northwest (Cascadia Region), and Northern and Southern California, with plans for seven major seaports, five major air hubs and a vast network of highway, transit and rail networks.

How does the SPP operate?

The SPP is being implemented by three “Security” and ten “Prosperity” Working Groups composed of corporate and financial executives and government officials from the three countries. Once a year the heads of the three countries and the working groups meet to advance the SPP.

The SPP official site states -

“**Transportation Working Group**...will improve the safety and efficiency of North America's transportation system by expanding market access, facilitating multimodal corridors, reducing congestion, and alleviating bottlenecks at the border that inhibit growth and threaten our quality of life”

Based on the Trans-Texas Corridor plan, each SuperCorridor route would ideally have:

- Six auto and four truck lanes
- Two freight railway lines
- High-speed commuter railways
- Pipelines for water, oil and natural gas
- Lines for electricity and telecommunication

How much of this could be realized going down the West Coast remains to be seen.



■ Sources

- Report “From B.C. to B.C....and Beyond: the Story of the West Coast Corridor Coalition”
<http://www.bettertransport.info/cascadia/WCCCoverview.pdf>
- The West Coast Corridor System: A National Asset and Priority: A White Paper from the West Coast Corridor Coalition, Feb. 2004
- West Coast Corridor Coalition ByLaws, Aug. 2006

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The West Coast Corridor Coalition Vision

Coalition reports stress how the West Coast economy is the 6th largest in the world and serves not only the US economy, but that Washington and California are linked also with NAFTA trading partners - Canada and Mexico.

As free-trade and the SPP “vision of prosperity” increases imports, chokepoints and congestion, Coalition goals are to (1) develop “shared policy visions on transportation, land-use, environment and other issues affecting the vitality and quality of life along the corridor” and (2) seek Federal funding for transport improvements because this region is essential not just to the regional, but to the national economy.

Corridor advocates admit that an estimated 80% of truck movement in urban areas serves local distribution needs. Yet to accommodate the remaining 20% of traffic as a result of imports from Asia, a vast and costly transport system is being imposed. This in anticipation that imports of “endless more” will continually increase, despite rising labor cost in Asia and the price of oil and gas for transport by sea, land and air.

Who stands to benefit along the West Coast?

Construction and builders, retail big-box, restaurant, entertainment and tourism and multinational corporations that can buy up land for access to natural resources, speculation and development along the Corridor - these will all benefit. This happens before the public and local communities are aware or can organize to advocate for an alternative vision.

Take, for example, the Mount Shasta region of Northern California, where the bottled water giants, such as Coca Cola and Nestlé, have bought land to access spring water and expand, or build, new bottling plants.

Recently Crystal Geyser Spring Water Bottling Co. purchased 30 acres in the Shasta Business Park, part of the Shasta Valley Enterprise Zone, Siskiyou County, to build the “largest” spring water bottling plant in the world.

Promoters of the Zone advertise -

“ We have all the great connections....Located along Interstate 5, the largest truck corridor in the United States, the Shasta Valley Enterprise Zone is uniquely positioned to offer companies access to direct routes to Canada and Mexico, and all international sea and airports in between.”

Corporate Enterprise Zones

Crystal Geyser shows that as the West Coast Corridor is promoted, these Zones and other programs are used to realize the SPP “vision of prosperity.” These large corporations and multinationals benefit by locating and expanding in Enterprise Zones with advantageous tax relief, incentives, and credits.

In the Shasta Valley Enterprise Zone, there is more than \$32,000 in state tax credits for each qualified employee hired and/or \$20 million per year on machinery and parts. Enterprise Zone companies can also earn preference points on state contracts.

Large businesses and multinationals also benefit when government uses eminent domain to acquire vast acreage of productive land for the Corridors and Ports, or when public land, such as a military base in Texas, is converted to private use for an Inland Port.

The People loose out when:

- corridors are routed around or through their communities
- their tax dollars are used to improve and build the transport infrastructure and public highways are turned into private toll roads
- environmental and land-use regulations can be lowered or not apply in the Enterprise Zones
- the “endless more” of imported goods and resources moving across the oceans and along the SuperCorridors increase global warming

WCCC Coalition is undemocratic.

The WCCC’s Executive Committee, Private Sector Advisory Committee and General Assembly are made up of staff from the Governors’ offices; state planning and transportation agencies; cities/counties; chambers of commerce; and air, shipping, freight and other transport businesses.

Have you been invited? Have you even heard anything from your elected officials about this? Is this your vision – the vision of your community?

So what stand should you take? Join with the Alliance for Democracy in calling for an end to this corporate coup d’état. Call for Congressional hearings in the four WCCC states on the impacts of the SPP and SuperCorridors on local communities, the environment and our freedom. Tell your members of Congress you don’t want privatized SuperCorridors gobbling up valuable land and exporting profits. For more on the SPP and SuperCorridors visit www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/SPP