

2019 Pacific Coast Council's (PCC) Mission to DC

By Raymond Hong



Attendees from CBFANC: Chris Ramos, Evey Hwang, Felicia Addison, Peter Gong, Sarah Stroth, Brenda Custer-Espeleta, Sung (John) Wook Lee, and Raymond Hong

Hosts: Peter & Debbie Friedmann, Ray Bucheger, Spencer Young, and Stephen Hudson

Saturday, March 30th, 2019

- Peter & Debbie Friedmann were the most gracious hosts as they invited all of the missionaries to their penthouse Saturday evening for Dangerously Delicious Pies and drinks in DC.

Sunday, March 31st, 2019 - Board Meeting & Mission Briefing

All of the associations met at the Phoenix Park Hotel Ballroom to provide updates from their associations and have a PCC Mission Briefing to prepare for the lobbying in the house and capital.

- The San Diego association had numbers customers ask about how the potential US/Mexico border closure as stated by President Trump would effect business.

- The Los Angeles and Seattle associations had major problems port congestion which results in chassis shortages, high demurrage/storage charges, and delayed delivery times.
- LA has had a significant decrease of port business due to congestion from 70%>50%. Which resulted in an increase to 50% in the NY/NJ area.
- LA has Board training and weekly newsletters, webinars which we could include in CBFANC (potentially).
- A bus picked us up from the hotel and took us to the new observation deck at CEB Tower in Arlington, VA where you could see the Washington monument, the Potomac, view of the Pentagon and Arlington Cemetery. After the Tallest view of DC, we were taken to dinner which was cosponsored by Roanoke and J&K Fresh at Barley Mac.

Monday, April 1, 2019

- We had a full morning of meetings at CBP HQ in the Regan Building where different CBP trade officials came to speak to us about a number of different topics where had a number productive and informative meetings. Some topics discussed were ACE, Drawback, TFTEA, CF 5106, 21st Century Framework Overview, ISF, In Bond Entry, and US Exports.
- Next to speak was USMCA Coalition Leaders- Fiat/Chrysler/OI where they talked about how to lobby in DC and how congress people like to hear from their constituents with specific examples.
- We also had a conference call with FDA Director John Verbeten.
- After that we headed over to the FMC to meet with Michael Khouri and Commissioner Rebecca Dye who listened to the feedback of the PCC for port congestion and problems it created in the trade community.
- Angela Ellard (Chief Trade Counsel and Trade Subcommittee Staff Director, Ways & Means Committee US House of Representatives) spoke to us about areas of trade talk that we could focus on. USMCA was one of the topics we discussed as well as de minimus.
- We ended the day with dinner at the Monocle with CBP and FMC Guests: Brenda Smith, Thomas Ovracker, Bradley Hayes, and Louis Sola.

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 – Capital Hill Meetings

We had breakfast with Hun Quach – VP for International Trade, Retail Industry Leaders Association. She gave us a quick speech about lobbying on the hill and how de minimus should stay at \$800 in EV as it's good for retail/e-commerce.

After we disbursed from the other associations the CBFANC group separated into separate groups as there was a several schedule conflicts during the same time or in separate buildings so the first staffers I met with were alongside Chris Ramos, Felicia Addison, and Peter Gong.

First, we met with Deputy Chief of Staff Jennifer Goedke, who represents Congressman Mike Thompson (who is on the Ways and Means Committee) she understood our trade asks and agreed with what we said. Then we met with Legislative assistant Art Motta, who represents Congressman Eric Swalwell (and is on the judiciary and permanent select committee on intelligence), coincidentally Peter and Felicia either work/live in Congressman's Swalwells' district so they were able to talk about their own personal experiences and how it relates to trade. After that we met directly with Congresswoman Jackie Speier (who is on the armed services, oversight and reform, and permanent select committee on intelligence) where all the CBFANC attendees were able to come along with Peter Friedmann where we were able to discuss local fumigation issues in Oakland, USMCA, and NAFTA. After a quick lunch we (Evey, Brenda, John and I) met with Ian Foley who represents Congressman Devin Nunes who is on the committee for Intelligence and is a ranking member, as well as the ways and means committee. We talked about NAFTA and how Congressman Nunes is for trade and wants to pass the USMCA and regarding the section 232 steel and aluminum tariffs there hasn't been much conversation regarding that as many people are quite tight lipped which means talks are going on in private per Ian.

Next we split apart again and Evie and I went over to meet with Sarah Jackson who is the policy associate for Speaker Nancy Pelosi and had quite an adventure. We thought we were having meeting at Pelosi's Longworth office but we were "diverted" to her Capitol office. The diversion mean a partial escorted walk thru tunnel with a security pass. The meeting was very productive as we learned just how much of a leader Pelosi is in terms of getting the democrats to vote as a whole. (We got a "promise" that she'd later share vote numbers on USMCA.) We also met with Dan Naske from Congressman's John Garamendis office (who represents armed services, transportation and infrastructure).

Overall USMCA might not pass until as per the democrats until the republicans concede on the following issues which were: Prescription drugs, raising the labor standards in Mexico, maintaining environment standards. Democrats will listen to Pelosi so if she rally's them together for a vote they will probably go with what she says. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer provides regular content for the democrats and the speaker respects him, the freshmen class is learning a lot of substantial content from him. The main issues we talked about were the USMCA, Section 232 Tariffs, Section 301 China Tariffs and Section 321/De Minimis. The topline message was that trade creates jobs and tariffs hurt the economy. This was a great learning experience and quite information to get a first hand look at how policy is made and how things get done in the capital. I would definitely urge anyone interested in politics to take this opportunity to go to the next mission to DC in 2020.