

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 293
By: Zaffirini
Border and International Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The long delay for commercial carriers entering the United States via a land port of entry along the international border has become a significant impediment to increased trade between Texas and Mexico.

The committee substitute to Senate Bill 293 requires the Department of Public Safety to initiate efforts to meet with its counterparts in bordering Mexican states to discuss issues relating to truck inspections and transportation and develop plans in conjunction with the border commerce coordinator to recommend ways to expedite trade by mitigating delays in border crossing inspections.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1 Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 411, Government Code, by adding Section 411.0097, to require the Department of Public Safety (Department) to initiate efforts to meet with its counterparts in bordering Mexican states to discuss issues relating to truck inspections and transportation and related infrastructure.

The bill requires the meetings to be at least quarterly and at least one Department representative be proficient in Spanish.

The Department shall contact the border commerce coordinator and the mayors of each municipality in which a port of entry for land traffic is located for assistance in carrying out the meetings and developing the plans described below.

In conjunction with the border commerce coordinator, the Department shall develop short-range and long-range plans including recommendations to increase bilateral relations with Mexico and expedite trade by mitigating delays in border crossing inspections for northbound truck traffic. In developing the plans, the Department and border commerce coordinator must consider information obtained from any meetings with Mexican officials as described above. The department shall update the plan biennially and submit the updated plan to the lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives and all other members of the legislature on or before December 1 of each even-numbered year.

SECTION 2 The Act takes immediate effect if it receives a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to each house. Otherwise, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The Act takes immediate effect if it receives a two-thirds vote of all the members elected to each house. Otherwise, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The committee substitute differs from the original in the following ways:

- it requires the Department to initiate efforts to meet with Mexican officials rather than requiring the Department to hold meetings;
- it requires that at least one Department representative participating in the meeting with Mexican officials be proficient in Spanish rather than all Department representatives;
- it removes the provision that the Department contact the United States ambassador to Mexico and the Texas Congressional delegation for assistance in carrying out the duties of Section 411.0097, Government Code; and,
- it changes the method by which plans must be developed by the Department.