

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 293
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AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, the border commerce coordinator is required by statute to examine trade issues between the United States, Mexico, and Canada and act as an ombudsman for government agencies within the Texas and Mexico border region to help reduce regulations by improving communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments. There is a current problem with long delays at United States ports-of-entry. This legislation develops initiatives that will help mitigate delays at the state's international ports-of-entry.

As proposed, S.B. 293 requires Department of Public Safety (department) officials who are proficient in Spanish to meet quarterly with their counterparts in the Mexican states bordering Texas to discuss issues relating to truck inspections and the related transportation and infrastructure. S.B. 293 requires the department to contact the United States ambassador to Mexico, the border commerce coordinator, Texas' congressional delegation, and the mayor of each municipality in which a port-of-entry for land traffic is located, to assist the department in carrying out the provisions of this legislation.

S.B. 293 also requires the department to submit to the legislature a report including documentation of the views, concerns, and recommendations of those participating in the meetings. Lastly, this legislation requires the department, in conjunction with the border commerce coordinator, to develop short-range and long-range plans to expedite trade by mitigating delays in border crossing inspections.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 411, Government Code, by adding Section 411.0097, as follows:

Sec. 411.0097. TRANSPORTATION AND INSPECTIONS MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MEXICAN STATES. (a) Requires the Department of Public Safety (department) to meet at least quarterly with the department's counterparts in the Mexican states bordering this state to discuss issues relating to truck inspections and transportation and infrastructure involved in truck inspections and transportation.

(b) Requires the department to contact the United States ambassador to Mexico, the border commerce coordinator designated under Section 772.010 (Governmental Planning), and certain elected officials, including certain local elected officials, to assist in carrying out this section.

(c) Requires that department representatives participating in a meeting under Subsection (a) be proficient in Spanish.

(d) Requires the department, no later than the 14th day after the date of the end of each meeting under Subsection (a), to submit to certain elected officials a report including certain information.

(e) Requires the department, based on information obtained from the meetings under Subsection (a), in conjunction with the border commerce coordinator, to 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. Requires the department to update the plan biennially and submit the updated plan to certain elected officials on or before December 1 of each even-numbered year.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.