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S.B. No. 185

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the powers and duties of the border commerce
3 coordinator.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Section 772.010, Government Code, as added by
6 Chapters 429 and 1339, Acts of the 76th Legislature, Regular
7 Session, 1999, is reenacted and amended to read as follows:

8 Sec. 772.010. BORDER COMMERCE COORDINATOR. (a) The
9 governor shall designate a border commerce coordinator in the
10 governor's office or the office of the secretary of state as
11 determined by the governor. The coordinator shall:

12 (1) examine trade issues between the United States,
13 Mexico, and Canada;

14 (2) act as an ombudsman for government agencies within
15 the Texas and Mexico border region to help reduce regulations by
16 improving communication and cooperation between federal, state,
17 and local governments;

18 (3) study the flow of commerce at ports of entry
19 between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial
20 vehicles across the border[+] and establish a plan to aid that
21 commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles;

22 (4) [~~3~~] work with federal officials to resolve
23 transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads
24 and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people

1 across the border between Texas and Mexico;

2 (5) [~~(4)~~] work with federal officials to create a
3 unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs;

4 (6) [~~(5)~~] work to increase funding for the North
5 American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and
6 wastewater facilities; and

7 (7) [~~(6)~~] explore the sale of excess electric power
8 from Texas to Mexico.

9 (b) The governor shall appoint a border commerce
10 coordinator to serve at the will of the governor in the governor's
11 office or in the office of the secretary of state and may select the
12 secretary of state as the coordinator.

13 (c) The coordinator shall work with local governments,
14 metropolitan planning organizations, and other appropriate
15 community organizations in the Texas Department of
16 Transportation's Pharr, Laredo, and El Paso transportation
17 districts, and with comparable entities in Mexican states bordering
18 those districts, to address the unique planning and capacity needs
19 of those areas. The coordinator shall assist those governments,
20 organizations, and entities to identify and develop initiatives to
21 address those needs. Before January 1 of each year, the coordinator
22 shall submit to the presiding officer of each house of the
23 legislature a report of the coordinator's activities under this
24 subsection during the preceding year.

25 (d) The coordinator shall:

26 (1) work with private industry and appropriate
27 entities of Texas and the United States to require that low sulfur

1 fuel be sold along highways in Texas carrying increased traffic
2 related to activities under the North American Free Trade
3 Agreement; and

4 (2) work with representatives of the government of
5 Mexico and the governments of those Mexican states bordering Texas
6 to increase the use of low sulfur fuel.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 772, Government Code, is amended by
8 adding Sections 772.0101 and 772.0102 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 772.0101. BORDER INSPECTION, TRADE, AND
10 TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) The border commerce
11 coordinator shall establish and appoint the members of the Border
12 Inspection, Trade, and Transportation Advisory Committee. The
13 members must include representatives of the Texas Department of
14 Transportation, the Department of Public Safety, the Office of
15 State-Federal Relations, the United States Department of
16 Transportation, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration,
17 and other representatives of state and federal agencies involved in
18 border crossing issues. Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not
19 apply to the size, composition, or duration of the Border
20 Inspection, Trade, and Transportation Advisory Committee.

21 (b) The coordinator shall work with the advisory committee
22 to:

23 (1) identify problems involved with border truck
24 inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure;
25 and

26 (2) develop recommendations for addressing those
27 problems.

1 (c) The coordinator shall work with the advisory committee
2 and appropriate agencies of Texas, the United States, and Mexico to
3 develop initiatives to mitigate congestion at ports of entry at the
4 Mexican border by conducting in Mexico inspections of trucks
5 entering Texas. In developing the initiatives, the coordinator
6 shall give consideration to similar initiatives proposed or
7 implemented at the border of the United States and Canada.

8 (d) The coordinator shall report quarterly to the presiding
9 officer of each house of the legislature on the findings and
10 recommendations of the advisory committee.

11 Sec. 772.0102. TRADE AND COMMERCE PLAN. (a) The border
12 commerce coordinator shall develop, in conjunction with
13 representatives of chambers of commerce and metropolitan planning
14 organizations in the Texas and Mexico border region, a
15 comprehensive trade and commerce plan for the region designed to:

16 (1) increase trade by attracting new business
17 ventures;

18 (2) support expansion of existing industries; and

19 (3) address workforce training needs.

20 (b) The plan must cover five-year, 10-year, and 15-year
21 periods.

22 (c) The coordinator shall work with industries and
23 communities on both sides of the border to develop international
24 industry cluster initiatives to capitalize on resources available
25 in communities located adjacent to each other across the border.

26 (d) The coordinator shall conduct annual conferences of
27 interested persons to:

- 1 (1) make the trade and commerce plan public;
2 (2) report on updated findings and progress of
3 implementation of the plan; and
4 (3) develop new international industry cluster
5 initiatives.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.