

By: Shapleigh

S.B. No. 1744

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the Texas-Mexico Strategic Investment Commission.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle F, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 490 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 490. TEXAS-MEXICO STRATEGIC INVESTMENT COMMISSION

Sec. 490.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Commission" means the Texas-Mexico Strategic Investment Commission.

(2) "Texas-Mexico border region" has the meaning assigned by Section 2056.002.

Sec. 490.002. PURPOSE. The ongoing economic stability and growth of Texas and the improved quality of life for all Texans is dependent in part on coordination with neighboring states. Texas and the Mexican border states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas face common challenges in the areas of infrastructure, health care, access to and availability of water, economic development and trade, and environmental protection. The commission will encourage a collaborative approach between Texas and neighboring Mexican states in specific areas so as to better address challenges and plan for the future.

Sec. 490.003. TEXAS-MEXICO STRATEGIC INVESTMENT COMMISSION; MEMBERS. (a) The Texas-Mexico Strategic Investment

1 Commission is established.

2 (b) The commission is composed of:

3 (1) the border commerce coordinator or a designee;

4 (2) the executive director of the Texas Department of
5 Transportation or a designee;

6 (3) the executive administrator of the Texas Water
7 Development Board or a designee;

8 (4) the commissioner of state health services or a
9 designee;

10 (5) the chair of the Railroad Commission or a
11 designee; and

12 (6) the executive director of the Texas Commission on
13 Environmental Quality or a designee.

14 (c) The border commerce coordinator shall serve as the chair
15 of the commission.

16 Sec. 490.004. FUNCTIONS OF COMMISSION. (a) The commission
17 shall:

18 (1) represent government agencies within the
19 Texas-Mexico border region to help reduce regulations by improving
20 communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local
21 governments;

22 (2) examine trade issues between the United States and
23 Mexico;

24 (3) study the flow of commerce at ports of entry
25 between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial
26 vehicles across the border, and establish a plan to aid that
27 commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles;

1 (4) work with federal officials to resolve
2 transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads
3 and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people
4 across the border between Texas and Mexico;

5 (5) work with federal officials to create a unified
6 federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs;

7 (6) identify problems involved with border truck
8 inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure;

9 (7) work to increase funding for the North American
10 Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater
11 facilities;

12 (8) explore the sale of excess electric power from
13 Texas to Mexico;

14 (9) identify areas of environmental protection that
15 need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican
16 states;

17 (10) identify common challenges to health care on
18 which all states can collaborate; and

19 (11) develop recommendations, when possible, for
20 addressing border challenges.

21 (b) The commission shall work with local governments,
22 metropolitan planning organizations, and other appropriate
23 community organizations in the Texas Department of
24 Transportation's Pharr, Laredo, and El Paso transportation
25 districts, and with comparable entities in Mexican states bordering
26 those districts, to address the unique planning and capacity needs
27 of those areas. The commission shall assist those governments,

1 organizations, and entities to identify and develop initiatives to
2 address those needs.

3 (c) The commission shall work with industries and
4 communities on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border to develop
5 international industry cluster initiatives to capitalize on
6 resources available in communities located adjacent to each other
7 across the border.

8 (d) The commission may meet at least once a year with
9 representatives from the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila,
10 Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas during the Border Governors Conference
11 to discuss issues and challenges of the Texas-Mexico border region
12 and develop strategic collaborative approaches for addressing the
13 challenges.

14 Sec. 490.005. FUNDING. (a) In addition to any amount
15 appropriated by the legislature, the commission may request state
16 agencies to apply for funds from the federal government or any other
17 public or private entity. The commission may also solicit grants,
18 gifts, and donations from private sources on the state's behalf.
19 The use of a gift, grant, or donation solicited under this section
20 must be consistent with the purposes of the commission.

21 (b) The commission shall review and may require reports of
22 state agencies that receive appropriations, gifts, grants,
23 donations, or endowments as a result of the commission's
24 recommendations.

25 (c) A state agency may accept a gift, grant, donation, or
26 endowment received as a result of the commission's recommendations.

27 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

1 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
2 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
3 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
4 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.