

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

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By: Corte, Frank (Wentworth)
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has initiated a competitive process to select a site for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), a first-in-the-nation integrated research endeavor designed to support the complementary missions of DHS, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the United States Department of Agriculture by assessing national security risks from emerging diseases that threaten animal and human health in the United States.

The Texas Bio- and Agro-Defense Consortium (TBAC), comprising three San Antonio research institutions, and the Texas A&M NBAF Consortium led by Texas A&M University have each submitted bids to locate the NBAF center in Texas with proposed sites at Brooks City-Base, the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research, and Texas Research Park in San Antonio and Research Valley centered around College Station.

The only city in the nation with three NBAF sites under consideration, the City of San Antonio offers a well-established, \$14 billion biomedical industry, a related workforce of more than 100,000, and an outstanding national reputation for scientific research. The city currently supports multiple Bio Safety Level-3 laboratories and is home to the nation's only privately owned Bio Safety Level-4 laboratory.

The Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research is one of the leading independent biomedical research institutions in the nation, partnering with hundreds of researchers and institutions around the world in the fight against cancer, AIDS, heart disease, and diabetes. Similarly, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio is home to esteemed researchers who study established and emerging infectious diseases and potential bioterror threats, often in collaboration with scientists at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

The Texas A&M proposal benefits from the university's strong leadership in biotechnology research, including two world-class facilities in the National Center for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense and the Institute for Plant Genomics and Biotechnology. The school also features the state's only College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. In addition, Texas A&M University and its consortium partners have extensive experience in conducting research in Bio Safety Level-3 and Level-4 environments, feature education and training programs that can provide technical and professional staffing for the NBAF, and have significant expertise in bringing together the nation's best scientific talent.

Both Texas proposals explicitly address DHS requirements relating to detection, diagnosis, prevention, and recovery, and the state's leadership has long supported the DHS's national security priorities. Given the quality of the two bids for the NBAF and the state's long-standing dedication to national security issues, Texas is a clear choice for this research endeavor.

RESOLVED

That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas expresses support for bids by the Texas Bio- and Agro-Defense Consortium and the Texas A&M NBAF Consortium to locate the DHS National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Texas, commends the City of San Antonio and Texas A&M University for their leadership and support of the biomedical and biotechnology industries, recognizes the state's continued support for national defense and the mission of DHS, and requires the Texas secretary of state to forward an official copy of this resolution to the United States secretary of homeland security.