

By: Shapleigh

S.C.R. No. 10

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The efficient movement and careful surveillance of
3 commercial and noncommercial traffic through the United States'
4 ports of entry are vital to this country's economic prosperity and
5 security, yet serious bottlenecks are choking customs inspection
6 lanes on the Texas-Mexico border; and

7 WHEREAS, With its entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs
8 and Trade in 1986 and the implementation of the North American Free
9 Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994, Mexico has become one of
10 the United States' primary trading partners; the strength of that
11 partnership is evident in the combined value of United
12 States-Mexico export-import trade, which rose from \$81.5 billion in
13 1993, the year before NAFTA went into effect, to \$183.7 billion in
14 just the first six months of 2008; and

15 WHEREAS, The overwhelming majority of United States trade
16 with Mexico--80 percent in 2002--passes through Texas ports of
17 entry, and over the past decade and a half these ports have seen a
18 dramatic increase in commercial traffic; the number of commercial
19 vehicles entering Texas from Mexico rose from 2.7 million in 1994 to
20 more than 4.3 million in 2001, and some estimates predict that
21 cross-border truck traffic in the Texas-Mexico border region may
22 increase by 85 percent between 2000 and 2030; and

23 WHEREAS, Neither the present border-crossing facilities nor
24 the current systems for inspecting and monitoring cross-border

1 traffic were designed to handle the volume of people, vehicles, and
2 goods now passing through checkpoints in Texas; compounding the
3 challenge posed by an inadequate infrastructure are the
4 increasingly detailed inspections, which are designed to reduce the
5 flow of illegal substances and to guard against terrorism; as a
6 result of these pressures, the length of the wait time at Texas
7 ports of entry is soaring; and

8 WHEREAS, Delays at the border are detrimental to economic
9 activity in the United States, adding to a company's cost of
10 shipping and impeding production at maquiladoras, which account for
11 the largest segment of United States-Mexico trade and which depend
12 on just-in-time delivery service to achieve savings and greater
13 efficiency; and

14 WHEREAS, Congestion caused by these delays also poses a
15 threat to public safety--the sheer scale of commercial traffic
16 means that only five percent of trucks entering Texas can be
17 physically inspected; in addition, pollution from idling vehicles
18 has harmed air quality to a marked degree and endangers the health
19 of border residents; and

20 WHEREAS, Robust foreign trade fosters domestic prosperity
21 and generates federal revenue, and a portion of that revenue should
22 be invested in support of customs operations, the smooth
23 functioning of which promotes the continued expansion of exports
24 and imports; expediting the flow of commercial traffic while
25 ensuring appropriately rigorous inspections will require a federal
26 commitment to fund improved infrastructure, including the
27 construction of additional customs inspection lanes and the

1 adoption of technology that will speed the movement of low-risk
2 traffic, as well as an increase in customs personnel and customs
3 operating hours; and

4 WHEREAS, In promoting the secure, swift movement of vehicle
5 and pedestrian traffic at United States land ports of entry, the
6 border states also have a major role to play; Section 1303 of the
7 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:
8 A Legacy for Users directs the United States secretary of
9 transportation to implement a coordinated border infrastructure
10 program and serves as a funding source for border area
11 infrastructure improvements and regulatory enhancements; and

12 WHEREAS, Texas legislators and business people are acutely
13 aware of the improvements that need to be made at ports of entry on
14 the Rio Grande, if the economic promise of NAFTA is to be fully
15 realized by this state and nation; these ports serve as a critical
16 gateway to foreign trade, and it is essential that they promote,
17 rather than hinder, the flow of that vital resource; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
20 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to
21 provide emergency funding and resources to begin immediately
22 addressing increasing delays at United States ports of entry on the
23 Texas-Mexico border; and, be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the congress provide funding for 24-hour
25 customs operations and for infrastructure improvements, including
26 more customs inspection lanes and more customs inspectors, at
27 border crossings between Texas and Mexico; and, be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
2 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
3 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
4 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the
5 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this
6 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
7 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.