

By: Shapleigh

S.C.R. No. 10

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Neither the present border-crossing facilities nor
23 the current systems for inspecting and monitoring cross-border
24 traffic were designed to handle the volume of people, vehicles, and

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

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

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

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

1 operating hours; and

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

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

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

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

26 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
27 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to

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