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H.C.R. No. 146

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Inadequate staffing and outdated infrastructure and
2 technology at land ports of entry on the southwestern border harm
3 the nation's economy and undermine the ability of United States
4 Customs and Border Protection to fulfill its mission; and

5 WHEREAS, For the past two decades, the federal government has
6 concentrated funding for the security of the United States-Mexico
7 border on deterrence in the regions between land ports, at the
8 expense of land ports of entry; as a result, the average land port
9 of entry is now more than 40 years old and in dire need of
10 modernization, as reported at the December 2008 U.S.-Mexico Joint
11 Working Committee by the head of the Customs and Border Protection
12 Land Ports of Entry Modernization Program, who estimated capital
13 costs for necessary upgrades at \$6 billion; and

14 WHEREAS, While funding for land ports of entry has lagged,
15 traffic passing through them has increased dramatically, as has the
16 value of goods traded; the value of imports carried by truck was
17 26.5 percent higher in 2010 than in 2009, and the value of exports
18 carried by truck was 24.3 percent higher, according to the U.S.
19 Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics;
20 in 2010, Texas not only led the country in surface trade with Mexico
21 with \$114.5 billion, but it became the first state to ever have more
22 than \$100 billion in trade with Mexico by surface modes of
23 transportation in a single calendar year; and

24 WHEREAS, This increased traffic places a great strain on

1 aging infrastructure and technology and requires massive amounts of
2 overtime for inspectors charged with screening cars and trucks;
3 these pressures cause serious and costly slowdowns; according to a
4 March 2008 draft report for the U.S. Department of Commerce
5 entitled "Improving Economic Outcomes by Reducing Border Delays,"
6 wait times averaging one hour at the five busiest land ports of
7 entry on the southern border resulted in an average economic output
8 loss of \$116 million per minute of delay; in 2008, the average
9 annual cost of these delays to the U.S. economy was nearly 26,000
10 jobs and \$6 billion in output, \$1.4 billion in wages, and \$600
11 million in tax revenues; by 2017, average wait times could increase
12 to nearly 100 minutes, costing more than 54,000 jobs and \$12 billion
13 in output, \$3 billion in wages, and \$1.2 billion in tax revenues
14 each year; the cumulative loss in output due to border delays over
15 the next 10 years is estimated to be \$86 billion; and

16 WHEREAS, With increased funding for enforcement in the
17 terrain between land ports, drug cartels and others have shifted
18 their trafficking operations; the probability of apprehending an
19 individual attempting an illegal crossing in these areas is now
20 about 70 percent, according to a report by Scott Borger of the
21 Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of
22 California-San Diego entitled "Estimates of the Cyclical Inflow of
23 Undocumented Migrants to the United States"; by contrast, at land
24 ports of entry, enforcement officers apprehend only about 30
25 percent of those engaged in major crimes, such as human
26 trafficking, drug smuggling, and possession of illegal weapons,
27 according to the Department of Homeland Security's Annual

1 Performance Report for Fiscal Years 2008-2010; and

2 WHEREAS, Reports by the U.S. Government Accountability
3 Office have found that infrastructure and technology at land ports
4 of entry are inadequate; in order to maintain national security
5 while expediting the flow of trade, it is imperative that our nation
6 modernize its land ports of entry and ensure that staffing levels
7 are adequate to manage an increasingly high volume of international
8 traffic; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
10 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to enact
11 legislation to provide sufficient manpower, infrastructure, and
12 technology to ensure the security and efficiency of land ports of
13 entry on the southwestern border; and, be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
15 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
16 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
17 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the
18 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that
19 this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a
20 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.