

By: Nevarez

H.C.R. No. 106

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1 WHEREAS, Inadequate staffing and outdated infrastructure and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, Since 1993, the number of border patrol agents
15 stationed between land ports of entry has more than quintupled, and
16 the budget has increased ninefold, from \$400 million to \$3.5
17 billion; in the same time period, funding for enforcement at land
18 ports of entry increased only 68 percent, from \$1.6 billion to \$2.7
19 billion; and

20 WHEREAS, While funding for land ports of entry has lagged,
21 traffic passing through them has increased dramatically, as has the
22 value of goods traded; the value of imports carried by truck was
23 26.5 percent higher in 2010 than in 2009, and the value of exports
24 carried by truck was 24.3 percent higher, according to the U.S.

1 Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics;
2 according to the Mexican Secretaria de Economia, in 2011, more than
3 \$250 billion worth of goods were traded between Mexico and the four
4 southern border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and
5 Texas; and

6 WHEREAS, This increased traffic places a great strain on
7 aging infrastructure and technology and requires massive amounts of
8 overtime for inspectors charged with screening cars and trucks;
9 these pressures cause serious and costly slowdowns; according to a
10 March 2008 draft report for the U.S. Department of Commerce
11 entitled "Improving Economic Outcomes by Reducing Border Delays,"
12 wait times averaging one hour at the five busiest land ports of
13 entry on the southern border resulted in an average economic output
14 loss of \$116 million per minute of delay; in 2008, these delays cost
15 the U.S. economy nearly 26,000 jobs and \$6 billion in output, \$1.4
16 billion in wages, and \$600 million in tax revenues annually; by
17 2017, average wait times could increase to nearly 100 minutes,
18 costing more than 54,000 jobs and \$12 billion in output, \$3 billion
19 in wages, and \$1.2 billion in tax revenues each year; the cumulative
20 loss in output due to border delays over the next 10 years is
21 estimated to be \$86 billion; and

22 WHEREAS, The federal government provided \$720 million for
23 land ports in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,
24 but most of those funds were allocated to the small, low-traffic
25 crossings on the Canadian border; although smaller Texas ports at
26 Los Ebanos, Falcon Dam, and Amistad Dam received some stimulus
27 funding, none of the larger Texas ports of entry received funds for

1 urgently needed improvements; 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 83rd 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.