

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2155
By: Guerra
Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Concerns have been raised regarding long wait times for agricultural inspections of vehicles at ports of entry along the Texas-Mexico border due to a lack of a sufficient number of federal inspectors. It has been noted that this has caused congestion in the stream of commerce that negatively affects the state's economy. H.B. 2155 seeks to address these concerns by providing for a trade agricultural inspection grant program for nonprofit organizations that have certain experience working with border inspection authorities.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Department of Agriculture in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2155 amends the Agriculture Code to authorize the Department of Agriculture (TDA), using applicable money, to make a grant to a nonprofit organization for the purpose of promoting the agricultural processing industry in Texas by reducing wait times for agricultural inspections of vehicles at ports of entry along the Texas border with the United Mexican States. The bill requires the TDA to request proposals for the award of such a grant, evaluate the proposals, and award a grant based on the proposed program's quantifiable effectiveness and the potentially positive impact on the agricultural processing industry in Texas. The bill requires an awarded grant to be made to an organization that has demonstrated experience working with border inspection authorities to reduce border crossing wait times. The bill provides for the authorized uses of grant money and requires the TDA to establish procedures to administer the grant program. The bill requires the TDA to enter into a contract that includes performance requirements with each grant recipient and sets out provisions relating to such a contract.

H.B. 2155 authorizes the TDA to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source for the purpose of awarding grants under the bill's provisions. The bill requires a nonprofit organization to provide matching funds to be eligible to receive a grant and sets out related provisions, including provisions capping the amount of a grant at the amount of matching funds and capping the total amount of grants awarded under the bill's provisions at \$725,000 for the duration of the program. The bill authorizes the TDA to adopt any rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions. The bill requires the TDA, not later than January 15, 2021, to evaluate the performance of the program and submit a related report to the legislature. Unless continued in existence by the legislature, the bill's provisions expire September 1, 2021.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.