By:  Canales, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Hinojosa) H.B. No. 4422

(In the Senate - Received from the House April 18, 2023; April 19, 2023, read first time and referred to Committee on Border Security; May 10, 2023, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 10, 2023, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

               Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Birdwell        X

Flores          X

Blanco          X

Hinojosa        X

King            X

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study on enhancing border security outcomes through public safety, technological, and transportation infrastructure improvements near Texas-Mexico border crossings.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  DEFINITION. In this Act, "department" means the Texas Department of Transportation.

SECTION 2.  STUDY. (a) The department shall conduct a study on public safety, border security, and transportation infrastructure from Texas-Mexico border crossings onto the state highway system to ensure safe, efficient, and streamlined commercial motor vehicle connectivity that amplify Operation Lone Star efforts.

(b)  The department shall conduct the study in consultation with:

(1)  the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas;

(2)  the Texas Military Department;

(3)  the Texas A&M Transportation Institute;

(4)  local law enforcement agencies near the Texas-Mexico border;

(5)  representatives of county government from at least three noncontiguous counties that are:

(A)  adjacent to this state's international border with Mexico; or

(B)  adjacent to a county described by Paragraph (A) of this subdivision;

(6)  representatives of the transportation industry determined relevant by the department; and

(7)  an independent nonprofit applied research and development organization selected by the department.

(c)  As part the study, the department shall:

(1)  select multiple Texas-Mexico international border crossings that serve commercial vehicles, as determined by the department;

(2)  analyze current transportation routes for commercial vehicles from border crossings selected under Subdivision (1) of this subsection onto the state highway system and identify ways to:

(A)  strengthen border security initiatives that support Operation Lone Star or similar state security efforts;

(B)  support law enforcement response efforts near border crossings to maximize:

(i)  oversight of border crossings;

(ii)  inspection of vehicles using the border crossing; and

(iii)  use of public safety resources;

(C)  enhance transportation infrastructure and road technology near border crossings to:

(i)  maximize the safety of communities located near the border and people using the highways near the border; and

(ii)  improve transportation efficiency and commercial motor vehicle connectivity; and

(D)  reduce traffic congestion along transportation routes while mitigating safety concerns;

(3)  consider possible future transportation routes that will:

(A)  improve efficiency in the movement of commercial motor vehicles from border crossings onto the state highway system; and

(B)  enhance public safety, mitigate traffic congestion, and streamline commercial motor vehicle connectivity;

(4)  assess current technologies used to promote border security efforts at commercial inspection facilities at or near border crossings and identify upgrades to existing technologies or alternative technologies that may improve border security efforts; and

(5)  identify funding strategies and determine the amount of state money needed to improve the processing and flow of commercial motor vehicles at border crossings and improve transportation efficiency and commercial motor vehicle connectivity.

SECTION 3.  REPORT. Not later than December 1, 2024, the department shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the legislature a written report on the findings of the study conducted under this Act and any recommendations of the department. The report must include a review of the anticipated effects of the security and public safety improvements recommended by the study on international trade efforts with Mexico.

SECTION 4.  EXPIRATION. This Act expires January 1, 2025.

SECTION 5.  EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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