By:  Nichols S.B. No. 1499

(In the Senate - Filed March 2, 2023; March 16, 2023, read first time and referred to Committee on Transportation; March 22, 2023, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; March 22, 2023, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

                 Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Nichols           X

West              X

Alvarado          X

Eckhardt          X

Hancock           X

King              X

Miles             X

Parker            X

Perry             X

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the funding of certain port projects.

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

SECTION 1. The heading to Chapter 55, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

CHAPTER 55. FUNDING OF PORT DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE [~~SECURITY,~~] PROJECTS, PORT CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS, AND STUDIES

SECTION 2. Sections 55.001(4-a) and (5), Transportation Code, are amended to read as follows:

(4-a)  "Port connectivity [~~access improvement~~] project" means the construction or improvement of public roadways that will enhance connectivity to ports.

(5)  "Port development and infrastructure [~~security, transportation, or facility~~] project" means an infrastructure, security, transportation, or facility [~~a~~] project that is necessary or convenient for the proper operation of a maritime port and that will improve the security, movement, and intermodal transportation of cargo or passengers in commerce and trade.

SECTION 3. Section 55.002, Transportation Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a), (c), and (e) and adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(a)  From money in the fund, the department shall fund:

(1)  port development and infrastructure [~~security, transportation, or facility~~] projects; and

(2) maritime port studies.

(c)  Port development and infrastructure [~~security, transportation, or facility~~] projects eligible for funding under this chapter include:

(1)  construction or improvement of transportation facilities within the jurisdiction of a maritime port;

(2)  the dredging or deepening of channels, turning basins, or harbors;

(3)  the construction or improvement of wharves, docks, structures, jetties, piers, storage facilities, cruise terminals, or [~~any~~] facilities necessary or useful, as determined by the committee, in connection with maritime port transportation or economic development;

(4)  the construction or improvement of facilities necessary or useful in providing maritime port security;

(5)  the acquisition of container cranes or other mechanized equipment used in the movement of cargo or passengers in [~~international~~] commerce and trade;

(6)  the acquisition of land to be used for maritime port purposes;

(7)  the acquisition, improvement, enlargement, or extension of existing maritime port facilities; and

(8)  environmental protection projects that:

(A)  are required as a condition of a state, federal, or local environmental permit or other form of approval;

(B)  are necessary for the acquisition of spoil disposal sites and improvements to existing and future spoil sites; or

(C)  result from the undertaking of eligible projects.

(e)  The commission may use money from the Texas Mobility Fund to provide funding for a port connectivity [~~access improvement~~] project.

(f)  No one port applicant eligible for funding under this section may receive more than 20 percent of the total amount of money appropriated to the department in a fiscal biennium to fund its eligible projects under this section.

SECTION 4. Section 55.005, Transportation Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(b)  The following money shall be credited to the fund:

(1)  money received from gifts, grants, and donations; [~~and~~]

(2)  interest earned on deposits and investments of the fund;

(3)  money appropriated to the fund by the legislature; and

(4)  money received from the federal government.

(c)  Money in the fund may be appropriated only to the department to perform the department's powers and duties concerning maritime port transportation and economic development under this chapter and to pay the department's expenses incurred under this chapter, as approved by the committee.

(c-1)  Money appropriated by the legislature under Subsection (b)(3) may only be used to fund eligible port development and infrastructure projects under Section 55.002.

SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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