

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
77R4031 JMG-D

S.B. 508  
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Business & Commerce  
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As Filed

### **DIGEST AND PURPOSE**

Currently, inspection and customs procedures at ports-of-entry in Texas are outdated and cannot keep up with the increase in border traffic resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This has led to congestion and air pollution in border cities and restricted the movement of goods and people across the border. As proposed, S.B. 508 directs the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house of representatives to establish a border community trade task force for each of the four municipalities with the largest populations in the border region and charges each task force with identifying procedural and infrastructure barriers to the flow of commerce between the United States and Mexico at Texas ports-of-entry.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. Defines “border region” and “task force.”

SECTION 2. BORDER COMMUNITY TRADE TASK FORCE. Requires the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house of representatives to establish a border community trade task force for each of the four municipalities with the largest populations in the border region to identify procedural and infrastructure impediments to the free flow of trade between the United States and Mexico along the border region and make findings and recommendations as considered appropriate regarding those trade impediments.

SECTION 3. MEMBERSHIP; OFFICERS. Requires the speaker of the house of representatives and lieutenant governor to jointly appoint not more than 25 members to serve on each task force. Requires each task force to include certain persons. Requires the speaker of the house of representatives and lieutenant governor to jointly select the presiding officer of each task force from among the task force members. Authorizes a task force to designate other officers as the task force considers appropriate.

SECTION 4. ASSISTANCE; EXPENSES. Authorizes each task force to request assistance and information, other than confidential information relating to an individual, from the Department of Public Safety and the Texas Department of Transportation. Requires those departments to provide the assistance and information requested to the extent practicable. Authorizes the expenses of each task force, including the compensation of necessary staff, to be paid from any appropriate funds of the house of representatives and the senate. Authorizes the legislature to appropriate money for the support of each task force.

SECTION 5. TASK FORCE DUTIES. Requires each task force to study and evaluate the procedures and practices maintained at the port of entry between Texas and Mexico nearest to the municipality represented by the task force to determine what modifications could be made to expedite the flow of trade from Mexico, including studying certain topics. Requires each task force to also study the primary

and secondary inspection processes relating to motor carrier safety regulations and commercial driver's licensure requirements administered by the Department of Public Safety to determine which of those processes, regulations, and requirements are authorized to be automated to expedite the free flow of trade across the border crossing from Mexico. Requires each task force to focus on analyzing current situations and developing solutions in anticipating of the removal of geographical access barriers on Mexico commercial trucks.

**SECTION 6. REPORTS.** Requires not later than December 31, 2002, each task force to file a report of the task force's activities, findings, and recommendations with the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house of representatives. Requires each report to include any recommendations for legislative or administrative action the task force considers appropriate.

**SECTION 7. EXPIRATION.** Provides that the task forces are abolished and this Act expires September 1, 2003.

**SECTION 8.** Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2001.