

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BORDER TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Friday,
October 26, 2007
11:15 a.m.

Room 1-124
Thompson Conference Center
2405 Robert Dedman Drive
Austin, Texas 78712

PRESIDING: PHIL WILSON, Border Commerce
Coordinator

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

JOE GALVAN
FRANCES RODRIGUEZ
BILL STOCKTON
ROSALVA GUERRA
CARLOS MARIN
JESSE MEDINA
CHAD FOSTER
MICHAEL O'TOOLE
TOM MOORE

ALSO PRESENT:

RAYMOND SANCHEZ
ESTHER HITZFELDER
GUS De La ROSA
MANUELA ORTIZ
SASHA RUSSELL
KATHERINE TELEKI
HECTOR MORALES
JACK FOSTER
JIM RANDALL
RICHARD MARTINEZ
ALFONSO CASSO
HELENA ESCALANTE
TAMMY STONE

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. WILSON: Good afternoon. My name is Phil
3 Wilson. I'm the Texas Secretary of State. Hope you all
4 are doing well today. Thank you very much for being here.

5 I want to thank TxDOT for facilitating and arranging this
6 meeting today of the Border Trade Advisory Committee.

7 Two requests today for our court reporter as
8 we're going through this meeting, one, please be sure to
9 state your name before you speak so we can keep record of
10 that for the public, and, second, the microphones, as
11 you're speaking into them, are not for amplification,
12 they're solely for recording. So if you can't figure out
13 why you can't hear, that's why. They're for over here
14 that way.

15 We do not have a quorum today, so we'll spend
16 some time on business and talking about more round table
17 conversation. But since we do not have a quorum, we'll
18 not be able to take any official action without that.

19 This is my first Border Trade Advisory
20 Committee. I'd like to spend a few minutes having
21 everyone go around the room and introduce themselves, say
22 where you're from and what you do, and that way we can at
23 least have the understanding of some of our partners in
24 this effort.

25 So if we'll start right over here. Sir?

1 MR. GALVAN: Good morning. Buenos dias. My
2 name is Jose Galvan, I'm the president and chief operating
3 officer of the Brownsville and Matamoros Bridge Company in
4 Brownsville, Texas.

5 MR. SANCHEZ: Good morning. My name is Raymond
6 G. Sanchez, Jr., I'm a transportation planner for the
7 Texas Department of Transportation out of the Pharr
8 district.

9 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. My name is
10 Frances Rodriguez, I'm city manager for the City of Del
11 Rio.

12 MS. HITZFELDER: Hi, I'm Esther Hitzfelder, I
13 work in the international relations office at TxDOT.

14 MR. De La ROSA: Good morning. Augustine De La
15 Rosa. I'm the director for the international relations
16 office at TxDOT.

17 MR. STOCKTON: Good morning. My name is Bill
18 Stockton, I'm associate director of the Texas
19 Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University system, and
20 all of the border trade and border crossing activities we
21 do are under my jurisdiction.

22 MS. ORTIZ: Good morning. I'm Manuela Ortiz
23 with the international relations office at TxDOT.

24 MS. RUSSELL: Good morning. I'm Sasha Russell,
25 also with the international relations office at TxDOT.

1 MS. GUERRA: Good morning. My name's Rosalva
2 Guerra, and I'm a Zapata County Judge.

3 MR. MARIN: Good morning. I'm Carlos Marin,
4 I'm U.S. Commissioner for the International Boundary and
5 Water Commission.

6 MR. MEDINA: Good morning. I'm Jesse Medina,
7 I'm the bridge director for the City of Pharr, Pharr
8 International Bridge.

9 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Chad Foster, Mayor of the
10 City of Eagle Pass.

11 MR. O'TOOLE: Good morning. I'm Michael
12 O'Toole, I'm project -- I'm director of project
13 development in the bridge division of TxDOT.

14 MR. RANDALL: Good morning. My name's Jim
15 Randall, I'm director of the transportation planning and
16 programming division and we provided staff support for the
17 committee.

18 MR. FOSTER: Good morning. My name is Jack
19 Foster, I'm the director of assistance planning and
20 program management with TxDOT.

21 MR. MORALES: Hector Morales with Sunset
22 Advisory Commission.

23 MS. TELEKI: Hi, I'm Katherine Teleki, I'm also
24 with Sunset.

25 MR. MARTINEZ: Hello, I'm Richard Martinez with

1 the Secretary of State's office.

2 MR. CASSO: I'm Alfonso Casso with the Texas
3 Border and Mexican Affairs division for the Secretary of
4 State's office.

5 MR. HAYWOOD: Scott Haywood with the Secretary
6 of State's office.

7 MS. ESCALANTE: I'm Helena Escalante with the
8 Secretary of State's office.

9 MS. STONE: I'm Tammy Stone with the Texas
10 Department of Transportation, transportation planning and
11 programming division, and I'm the one that sent you all
12 e-mails.

13 MS. ESCALANTE: Thank you --

14 MALE VOICE: I know you.

15 MS. ESCALANTE: -- so much for putting this
16 together, Tammy.

17 MR. WILSON: Thank you, Tammy.

18 MS. ESCALANTE: We really appreciate all your
19 help.

20 MS. STONE: You're welcome.

21 MR. WILSON: Great. Thank you. I want to
22 spend a couple of minutes talking about the purpose of our
23 committee. As you all know, if you don't, then we'll get
24 out there and get the message all the time, trade is very
25 important to our state.

1 As a matter of fact, we're the largest
2 exporting state in the union. We have about a \$150
3 billion worth of trade annually from Texas for the
4 exports. On top of that, about a third of that is between
5 Texas and Mexico. So we are a very tradecentric border
6 trade specific state. We've had a great little success.

7 As you know, trade also works both ways. So
8 the stuff we send out, we're getting stuff in, for lack of
9 a better phrase. And because of that we have a lot of
10 challenge when it comes to infrastructure, which is why
11 TxDOT's the bottom part of this in making sure we have the
12 right processes and people and mechanisms in place to
13 facilitate trade in as expeditious of a manner as
14 possible.

15 So the purpose of our committee today is to
16 talk about how we can make recommendations on two pronged
17 level, one, recommendations to the state legislature for
18 policy and/or laws that we need to consider, particularly
19 on the state level as it relates to transportation and the
20 movement of people and goods, and, secondly,
21 recommendations to the federal government on the policy in
22 the legislative arena.

23 The way I understand from our last meeting,
24 about 75 percent of our recommendations were federally
25 related. And there's not a lot we can do about that,

1 except make recommendations. The federal government may
2 or may not implement those.

3 And I want us to have as productive a meeting
4 as we can. And we know the federal government is paying
5 attention, because they're focusing a lot of time and
6 energy in those areas, but we can't necessarily implement
7 or execute plans as it relates to the state.

8 So having said that, what I would like to ask
9 the committee to respectfully consider, as we're having
10 discussion today, is we'd like to talk about the art of
11 what Texas can do as we look at our recommendations to the
12 policy side. or the regulatory side, and on recommended
13 legislative changes.

14 What can we recommend to state agencies, and in
15 particular TxDOT, as kind of our host facilitator on trade
16 advisory, to implement ideas and thoughts to make trade
17 easier between Mexico and Texas, always keeping in mind
18 that it is a multibillion dollar industry as I talked
19 about at the onset.

20 So as we go through our conversations, since we
21 do not have a quorum, this will be more of a free flow of
22 ideas and challenges. We've got a lot of policy experts
23 from a wide variety of fields, and we would appreciate
24 your input to have a conversation for a period of time
25 this morning, and it will run through the rest of the

1 meeting as we go with that.

2 So, Helena, do we need to discuss any updates,
3 implementations, actions for the Border Trade Advisory
4 Committee from last year?

5 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely. This -- let me
6 just get closer to the microphone. Can everybody hear me?

7 Okay. Does everybody have their blackberries? Did you
8 get a -- oh, let me give this to you. There are a few
9 back there. Here you go. Anybody else? Okay. Thank
10 you.

11 Are you all -- did you remember -- have you had
12 a chance to read what is in here in terms of the
13 recommendations to -- actually, do you mind if I go
14 back --

15 MR. WILSON: Yes, you're more than --

16 MS. ESCALANTE: -- there so I can see
17 everybody?

18 MR. WILSON: Right.

19 (Pause.)

20 MS. ESCALANTE: Thank you. Well, more than
21 anything, as the Secretary was saying, what we would like
22 to do is try to figure out how much can we do as Texas,
23 and the, of course, there will always be recommendations
24 at the local and at the federal level, but those --
25 needless to say, there's nothing much that we can do other

1 than send a letter perhaps signed by the presiding
2 officer, Secretary Wilson, as well as Amadeo Saenz as
3 executive director of TxDOT.

4 However, what we would like to do is to focus
5 on all those things that Texas can do. So what I would
6 like to do, if you're okay with this, is just start the
7 dialogue and free flowing ideas as to how can we go about
8 those strategies into the four categories that the report
9 was broken up last year so that we can figure out what are
10 the next steps, where do we go from here.

11 MR. WILSON: Great.

12 MS. ESCALANTE: So why don't we go -- the
13 first -- just to refresh our memories, last year we came
14 up with four categories for both long- and short-term
15 recommendations, which was the mandate of the legislature:
16 Trade transportation corridors, coordination with Mexico,
17 safety and security measures, and economic benefits of
18 international trade.

19 And so category A is trade and transportation
20 corridors. And the effect of this category was to promote
21 the development of ample and expandable trade
22 transportation corridors. The first item, 1.1, is local,
23 item 1.2 is local, but 1.3 has a state component to it and
24 that is to develop local support for public-private
25 partnerships to fund the Texas Transportation

1 Commission -- no, no --

2 MR. WILSON: Trans-Texas Corridor.

3 MS. ESCALANTE: Pardon me. Yes. I'm sorry.

4 Too many acronyms.

5 MR. WILSON: Too many TTCs.

6 MS. ESCALANTE: That's right. That's right.

7 Exactly.

8 MR. CHAD FOSTER: I like that committee funding
9 though, that's --

10 MS. ESCALANTE: Pardon me?

11 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- we'll have committee
12 funding?

13 MS. ESCALANTE: So anyway, since, you know, we
14 don't have to have the formalities of -- for a real
15 meeting since there's no quorum, I would just open up for
16 suggestions or any ideas that you have.

17 MR. De La ROSA: And if I may --

18 MS. ESCALANTE: Of course.

19 MR. De La ROSA: -- a suggestion that we were
20 discussing is that in going over the strategies that were
21 identified by the committee last year and that were
22 approved by our commission and submitted to the legislated
23 as a report, going over the strategies and the different
24 implementation actions, there are a number of things that
25 we know are already ongoing in many of these areas. So

1 there is action that's ongoing.

2 Now we -- I would ask -- or I would recommend
3 that we have membership from basically all of the Texas
4 and Mexico border at the local level. We have mayors, we
5 have other city officials, county, et cetera. I would
6 suggest that, as committee members, that they would go
7 back and maybe have their staff look at all these
8 strategies and implementation actions and submit to the
9 chair those things that are going at the local level that
10 are supporting a lot of these things.

11 And we at our agency ought to do the same and
12 discuss or submit to you what's going on as an example,
13 with the joint working committee, the binational bridges
14 group. There's other organizations that are doing a lot
15 of things and that we participate in. So we just need to
16 capture that I think, and we can at least report some of
17 those actions.

18 MR. WILSON: I think it's a great idea. I
19 think taking this -- so if I could reiterate what you just
20 described, capture it the right way, and then maybe give
21 some assignments to the group as a whole. I think it's a
22 fabulous idea.

23 Is it -- from this document here, you know a
24 lot of action has taken place that we would like to bring
25 everyone's attention to understand the coordination to

1 move ahead. So we need to work with Tammy this week to
2 send e-mails out to every one of you all with some
3 assignments about what you feel you can capture in this
4 document that's changed since last year.

5 And then once we have a time line, hopefully
6 the next two to three weeks, we'll then collect all that
7 and send it back out to you as members with a status
8 report of, a year ago we had this as an objective, here
9 are the processes that have taken place and actionable
10 items, and we get a status update over the past year.

11 Is that a fair summation of what you just said?

12 MR. De La ROSA: Yes, sir.

13 MR. WILSON: Great. I think it's a great idea.
14 We should do that.

15 So, Helena, would you please coordinate --

16 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely.

17 MR. WILSON: -- with Tammy on that too?

18 MS. ESCALANTE: I'd be more than --

19 MR. WILSON: Great.

20 MS. ESCALANTE: -- glad to.

21 MR. WILSON: I think that would be following
22 all four of our objectives on the sheet we're talking
23 about today from the past year. At the same time we'd
24 also set our next meeting after we read that and make some
25 recommendations to really hone down our focus as we talked

1 about today to the state opportunities and objectives.

2 Okay.

3 MS. ESCALANTE: Well, Gus, would you like to
4 just brief us really, really quick on your end, on TxDOT's
5 side, on what has been happening so that we can have a
6 little better idea as to, say, some of the recommendations
7 that are here?

8 MR. De La ROSA: Okay. As an example, on the
9 first one, on the strategy, and I won't read it, but
10 it's -- the first strategy under trade transportation
11 corridor, it talks about an implementation action of
12 developing consensus and support for the Trans-Texas
13 Corridor, short term.

14 I know that within our office we have provided
15 information to our Mexican counterparts about the Trans-
16 Texas Corridor in an effort to coordinate future, you
17 know, connections or coordination with them that we're
18 going to require with Mexico, because we just don't want
19 the Corridor to go to the border and then stop there, but
20 facilitate how that's going to continue or for them to
21 have access to it.

22 So we have made presentations at the state
23 level, at the federal level in the Mexican government. We
24 have made presentations at an organization that's called
25 the Northeastern Mexico and Texas Group. There was a

1 memorandum signed by Governor Perry with the four border
2 states about two or three years ago.

3 So -- and they've had logistical workshops
4 since then in Monterey and Houston, and just recently in
5 Tampico. So those are the things that we're doing to
6 support that effort, you know, this particular thing.

7 And then the other, the second implementation
8 action, it talks about develop consensus and support for
9 all major trade corridors. Well, we have the La Entrada
10 al Pacifico Corridor that we're trying to promote.

11 There's a working group that was organized by
12 the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sinaloa to move that
13 effort forward on the Mexican side. We have
14 representation by our El Paso district that participates
15 in that. And, of course, we're also doing the feasibility
16 study on our side. So those are efforts that I think
17 support, you know, that action.

18 And then just skipping down to the second
19 strategy about developing policies to facilitate trade,
20 well, we're building the border safety inspection
21 facilities within our agency, you know, to support that
22 effort. We have the CBI funds, the coordinating border
23 infrastructure funds, that are used along the border to
24 identify projects that are going to facilitate trade flow
25 and other things along the border.

1 We're also working in trying to get a border
2 wait time study going down in the Rio Grande Valley to try
3 to capture delays at the crossing from when a commercial
4 vehicle hits the queue on the Mexican side till it
5 actually clears the processing on the U.S. side, how long
6 is that taking. So those are efforts to facilitate trade.

7 And so those are just examples, you know, that
8 we know of. And also the joint working committee where we
9 participate in, there's a lot of different actions that
10 are ongoing with that group that are, you know, supporting
11 the facilitation and things that are going on at the U.S.-
12 Mexico border. So those are the type of things that I'm,
13 you know, suggesting.

14 And another example on the third strategy, on
15 page 5, about coordinating effectively with Mexico to
16 ensure the planning and development of two trade
17 corridors, well, you know, our border districts meet
18 without Mexican counterparts on a quarterly basis, and
19 more often as needed, to discuss different planning
20 efforts, projects that are ongoing.

21 So all that is happening, and so we just need
22 to kind of capture that and provide that information, you
23 know, to the chair so we can put together a report. And
24 there's a lot of things that are ongoing at border cities,
25 the MPOs, that are ongoing that we're not aware of, but

1 that can be captured and also input into this report.

2 MR. WILSON: I think that's very good. One
3 thing I would ask in addition to capturing all of the
4 great activity you're involved in, and you covered a lot
5 right there, for all of us, if we could identify whether
6 it's the city, the port, if you could find out, and I'm
7 using this as a hypothetical number, so please, one, two
8 or three things, if you could fix or change from the
9 state's perspective as a recommendation side.

10 That's really what I'd like to take forward
11 from the committee so we could look at all the great work
12 that's being done with these meetings, with this
13 coordination, with the spending successes. We'll look at
14 some successes. I'm always looking for those also for our
15 group. But also if we had some things that can either be
16 done from a regulatory standpoint or a statutory
17 standpoint, what we choose to have happen from a state
18 perspective to accommodate and accelerate trade
19 relationships. Okay.

20 MS. ESCALANTE: That would be a great idea.
21 One of the things that I would like to ask Gus is, we had
22 a conversation about how complicated, how complex it would
23 be, this study about waiting times at the border, because
24 I simply asked the question, Well, is the longest waiting
25 time, and it is so much more involved.

1 So I would like for you, Gus, to share with the
2 rest of the group, so that you can fill us in, as to how
3 complex that process of determining it is, and what the
4 different ideas are for getting that report done.

5 MR. De La ROSA: Well, I can probably give you
6 just kind of a general description. I think my cohort
7 here, Bill Stockton, could probably give you a lot better
8 detailed explanation of that since they're going to be
9 doing the research for us. We're just kind of overseeing
10 that.

11 But what we're trying to capture basically is
12 how long is it taking, you know, for, in this case,
13 commercial vehicles, and we hope to expand it later to
14 privately owned vehicles, but when they actually hit a
15 queue from the Mexican side. And it's going to vary from
16 crossing to crossing.

17 So that's where our researchers come into play,
18 they're doing analysis and identify what those points are.

19 But, you know, they hit that queue and then they have to
20 go through the Mexican Customs in processing whatever
21 process they have to take there.

22 Then they hit the actual -- the fast lane, or
23 if they have one, and then they go through our customs and
24 then our safety inspection processes that we have.
25 Sometimes they'll go with the federal safety inspectors

1 and then the state safety inspectors. So there's
2 sometimes issues with the dual inspection that we're also
3 looking at.

4 And then determine if -- at some point when
5 they complete all that processing, and, you know, it
6 varies a lot, it can go anywhere from an hour to four or
7 five hours maybe, you know, I don't know.

8 But, Bill, maybe you can --

9 MR. STOCKTON: Well, I'll just -- no, I think
10 Gus explained it very well. I'll just add a couple of
11 technical details to it. One, the process for measuring
12 the travel time, or trip time across the border, which is
13 what the user really cares about is what's my trip time
14 going to be, and if I leave now, or if I'm sitting in
15 traffic, et cetera, not different from what you'd see on a
16 freeway in Houston, they care what's my trip time going to
17 be to get to I-610 if I'm on I-10.

18 The process is very similar in that it involves
19 the installation of what I would call a toll tag reader on
20 the Mexican side before you get into the queue that might
21 start at Mexican Customs, and you install another reader
22 on the far end of the process, as Gus was explaining, when
23 you exit from the DPS truck safety inspection facility,
24 and the time stamp on those two reads, it reflects your
25 trip time.

1 Well, the idea here is to -- and you have a
2 very important term on page 4 under implementation action
3 2.1 where you use the term common measures of efficiency.

4 I think it's very important to be able to develop a
5 methodology by which you can measure ports -- or measure
6 border crossings and have comparable results from each
7 one, regardless of the physical size or the volume of the
8 trucks so that you can see, okay, here we're getting a lot
9 of efficiency out of this crossing, and not too much
10 efficiency out of this one. Why is that?

11 And if nothing else, it allows you to begin to
12 look for diagnostic reasons why one facility may be
13 performing less efficiently than another. And it involves
14 not just the inspection agencies, but it involves the
15 number of lanes on the bridge, the number of lanes on the
16 approach roads in both nations. So there are a number of
17 factors that go into this.

18 And the work that we're doing for TxDOT and for
19 the Federal Highway Administration is to identify those
20 factors and develop the measurement techniques. And then
21 how do you report it? Do you install signs on the road
22 side, which is the more expensive way of doing it, or do
23 you display it on the web? Putting it on the web's pretty
24 cheap, particularly compared to installing signs. But
25 probably both will be required.

1 I might add that the Mexicans are doing the
2 same thing. They're interested in southbound trip times.

3 And so they are pursuing very similar actions to what
4 TxDOT is doing to accomplish that southbound measurement
5 for -- particularly important in commute communities,
6 which is represented by a number of communities here right
7 now. This is something that will happen in the next six
8 months.

9 MR. CASSO: Bill, let me ask you a question, on
10 the wait time, if you're talking about a methodology, have
11 you all looked at what customs is doing, because if you go
12 to their web page, they have wait times, but I know that
13 they're all -- they're not really accurate, or they're
14 perhaps outdated. But I don't know what methodology
15 they're using.

16 MR. STOCKTON: Well, it varies by port of
17 entry. In fact, we met last week with the director for
18 the El Paso ports of entry, and they are dissatisfied with
19 their own methodology, so they're anxious to have
20 something that's a little more scientific.

21 What they're using in many cases is they will
22 put a time stamp on a card and give it to a driver of a
23 truck, and when that truck driver arrives -- this is
24 upstream of Mexican Customs, and when that truck driver
25 arrives at the primary booth for U.S. Customs, they write

1 down the arrival time, subtract the two, and that's the
2 trip time at that moment.

3 One of the -- it is so subject to variability
4 you really need a much larger sample, which you'll be able
5 to get using the toll tag technology because just in El
6 Paso alone DPS has distributed 15,000 toll tags, plus U.S.
7 Customs has the little toll tags in -- their own toll tags
8 in the windows. So we'll have a fairly high density of
9 reads, and you won't be subject to great variability on a
10 trip by trip basis.

11 MR. WILSON: Bill, can you please repeat what
12 exactly is going to happen in the next six months, because
13 you covered a lot of ground --

14 MR. STOCKTON: Okay.

15 MR. WILSON: -- and the precise action, if you
16 don't mind, sir.

17 MR. STOCKTON: Well, what will happen in the
18 next six months is -- maybe I should say eight months, but
19 anyway --

20 MR. WILSON: Well, give yourself eight. That's okay.
21 Sometime in the next year.

22 MR. STOCKTON: Well, in 2008 -- some of this is
23 going to be trial and error. I mean, it's part of the
24 experimental process of where does it work best. But
25 there will -- we have in hand toll tag readers that will

1 be installed in Juarez upstream of Mexican customs, and
2 another one that will be installed -- this is -- at least
3 one site will be at the Bridge of the Americas in El Paso,
4 downstream of Texas DPS.

5 And we'll begin the process of making those
6 measurements and looking at what times of day, what the
7 pattern looks like by time of day, how you would gather
8 than information and put it on a website like you would
9 see in traffic management centers around the country.
10 That will happen in the next -- in 2008.

11 We also have a project with TxDOT that looks
12 like it's going to go forward fairly quickly to do the
13 same thing at Pharr-Reynosa Bridge. So we'll have two
14 samples there.

15 We've been doing -- using a global positioning
16 system, which is a more expensive process than using the
17 toll tags. But we've been doing some GPS work for the
18 Zaragoza Bridge in El Paso to look at what those patterns
19 look like as well. Unfortunately it's a pretty low
20 density of data so it's not -- we're not really at point
21 where we could make recommendations on findings.

22 But those are the things -- we'll actually have
23 at least two bridges where this is will be installed and
24 we'll begin to experiment with is the location the right
25 location, does it need to be a little farther upstream to

1 make sure it doesn't get caught in the queue, a little
2 farther downstream, what do the data look like, how would
3 you present them on the web, what do they look like as a,
4 like an annual report because that kind of thing will be
5 useful as well. So that's the sort of thing that will
6 happen in the next -- during 2008.

7 MR. WILSON: So, and I think a couple of things
8 happened off that. One, we know anecdotally we've got a
9 lot of problems, particularly in the El Paso-Juarez area
10 with cross -- mainly coming south-north, that way. So
11 we'll know exactly -- you know, validate the anecdote from
12 a time line standpoint, I guess.

13 MR. STOCKTON: Right.

14 MR. WILSON: And also to come with policy
15 recommendations and what you want to do to shorten that
16 queue after you understand the length of time and the cost
17 involved with having a queue of that length.

18 MR. STOCKTON: Right.

19 MR. WILSON: Okay.

20 MR. STOCKTON: That's -- long term that's the
21 principal value, is it allows you to identify what
22 crossings is it that are having the most -- where you can
23 get a big return on investment from a particular project,
24 and diagnose exactly what kinds of improvements are
25 needed.

1 MR. WILSON: Outstanding. Those are great
2 examples. Thank you both for -- to point to you what
3 we're doing in the process and it's been going on in all
4 system, real things that will happen dramatically from an
5 execution standpoint. I think that's what I'd like to
6 have us kind of focus from the state perspective. That's
7 a great example of that to be able to point to this
8 committee and the legislature as we go forward.

9 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely. I do have one more
10 question, just to satisfy my ignorance. You talked about
11 toll tags, and so I imagine that's RFID. Right?

12 MR. STOCKTON: Right.

13 MS. ESCALANTE: And what is the difference in
14 cost with GPS, because it seems to me though that if you
15 have a specific toll tag reader assembled or set
16 somewhere, depending on the time of the year, obviously
17 that's going to go much faster or so, but say around
18 Christmas, or around those times that we know that it's
19 absolute peak, then your trip time is not going to start
20 counting until you reach that first point where the RFID
21 is recorded, and then you move forward.

22 MR. STOCKTON: Right.

23 MS. ESCALANTE: Right. But you may be already
24 in line two hours before.

25 MR. STOCKTON: Right.

1 MS. ESCALANTE: And it seems to me that GPS
2 would be able to pinpoint the vehicles at the point where
3 they really come to a stop, no matter what mile number, or
4 mile marker that is. But what's the difference in price,
5 or how do you see it?

6 MR. STOCKTON: Well, you explained the
7 technological differences very well, so I won't repeat
8 that. The difference is that if -- we can install an RFID
9 reader for 5 to \$10,000. And so it would take two of
10 those at one location.

11 Now -- but as you pointed out, you're only
12 measuring from point A to point B, no matter what else is
13 happening. So there are limitations on that. Part of the
14 research that we're doing is how do you overcome the
15 limitations. That's one -- that's part of the research.

16 But that's where either governments, or even
17 private sector if they -- if we were able to identify a
18 private sector benefit, can spend let's say 25-\$50,000
19 instrumenting a particular crossing, the toll tags
20 themselves are very inexpensive, less than \$10. So they
21 can be purchased and distributed and the net cost to get a
22 lot of reads is fairly inexpensive.

23 If you went the GPS route, and spent the same
24 amount, total amount of money, the number of GPS devices
25 you could buy would be much, much smaller. So you end up

1 with a fairly low density of data, and over time my
2 suspicion is that GPS would be a better choice. But right
3 now, and I say right now, the next five years, until the
4 price of GPS devices comes way down, plus there's some
5 privacy issues associated with GPS devices that aren't
6 associated with RFID because all you're doing with the
7 RFID is simply capturing the electronic signature --

8 MR. WILSON: Counting.

9 MR. STOCKTON: -- of that tag. It doesn't have
10 any -- it's completely anonymous. GPS, there's a little
11 more concern about privacy with some of the GPS. We've
12 been working with the trucking industry, for example, to
13 allow us to sample data from their GPS devices, because
14 many of them have it, which would really expand the
15 database.

16 The methodology that we're developing will be
17 technology independent. It won't matter whether it's
18 RFID, GPS, license plate reader, or anything else; the
19 methodology will be the same.

20 MS. ESCALANTE: Well, thank you very much.
21 That's very interesting.

22 Does anybody else want to share anything in
23 terms of what you are doing, what you're experiencing?

24 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Yes, if I may.

25 MS. ESCALANTE: Of course.

1 MR. CHAD FOSTER: In the state of Coahuila --

2 MS. ESCALANTE: I'm sorry --

3 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- highway --

4 MS. ESCALANTE: -- for the record, can you
5 state your name? Oh, but we're not --

6 MR. WILSON: We're not really in an official
7 meeting, but I think that's --

8 MS. ESCALANTE: That's right.

9 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Chad Foster, Mayor of Eagle
10 Pass. Highway 57, which is one of the last undeveloped
11 trade corridors into Mexico, and the two principal ports
12 coming out of the state of Coahuila are Eagle Pass and Del
13 Rio. Modelo -- Grupo Modelo is under construction on a
14 \$1.7 billion -- the largest brewery in the Americas, and
15 we're seeing a tremendous amount of economic development
16 along this trade corridor, which is four lanes from
17 Piedras Negras to Mexico City.

18 I mean, the issues that we have on a smaller
19 ports have not yet evolved, but one of the issues that we
20 see is there's no -- the flow is not as fluid, and it's
21 hung up basically on the customs brokers on the Mexican
22 side. The trucks are in place, but they're waiting on
23 paperwork before they can go and they all come in one
24 lump, so there's no continuity throughout the bridge hours
25 to facilitate quicker flow.

1 But trying to stay ahead of the curve because
2 we're -- you have Altos Hornos, which is a steel mill
3 three hours south of Piedras Negras, their production has
4 increased; Trinity Steel, which historically imported
5 steel, is now building -- fabricating rail cars and wind
6 towers in Coahuila.

7 So you're seeing -- I think Coahuila is
8 representative of 2.5 percent of the population of
9 Mexico, but at the same time Coahuila is generating 25
10 percent of the new jobs in Mexico. So trying to stay
11 ahead of the curve on that tremendous growth is the
12 challenge for the ports of Eagle Pass, as well as Del Rio.

13 And we just want to be sure we get out there
14 ahead because we don't want to try to play catch up on
15 this tremendous activity we see coming within the very
16 near future. Modelo, their raw products, 80 percent will
17 be railed in, 20 percent will be trucked in. When they're
18 in production in two years, they'll be railing out 200
19 rail cars on that day.

20 And that's just Modelo itself. Again, that's
21 just -- that brings in a cardboard manufacturer and glass
22 manufacturers. So the activity along the Highway 57
23 corridor is going to be in the very short term
24 overwhelming. So trying -- again, the issue is trying to
25 stay ahead of that tremendous activity rather than hang

1 around for the next couple of years and say, well, we're
2 behind, we want to catch up.

3 MS. ESCALANTE: That's a very good point.
4 Absolutely.

5 Anybody else have any --

6 MR. MEDINA: Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes. Absolutely.

8 MR. MEDINA: I have an issue I want to bring
9 up. I'm Jesse Medina with the Pharr International Bridge.
10 One thing that we've noticed, and a thing that everybody
11 involved with bridges had noticed, that car traffic is
12 down across the board everywhere.

13 And it has a sizable share of the commerce and
14 the contribution because usually Mexican choppers or
15 Mexican people come into the U.S. to spend their money.
16 And in our area it's a sizable amount of the commerce of
17 the Valley.

18 And it continues to go down. Inspections has
19 increased for cars. We've noticed that it takes about a
20 minute and a half to go through the commercial inspection,
21 for the trucks to go through the commercial inspection,
22 and about two minutes for cars. And it just doesn't seem
23 that that should be the way it is.

24 It seems to me that that has significantly
25 slowed down and caused a significant reduction on the

1 traffic on the bridges, not only in Pharr, but if you look
2 at the numbers, it's across the board, everybody's down,
3 significantly so. And I don't what can be done to
4 recommend, or what recommendations could be made. I don't
5 have any answers. But I do know that it is very -- you
6 know, across the board.

7 MR. WILSON: I've got it. We find that
8 interesting. And I'm also on the Border Security Council
9 and we've done hearings in the Valley, Laredo and El Paso,
10 we'll do two more in Corpus and San Antonio in December,
11 and make recommendations to the governor on how to spend
12 \$110 million, legislature appropriated, for the border
13 security when it comes to metrics and measuring how to do
14 that.

15 One of the things that came up in our last
16 meeting, and we're going to -- we're working on how to
17 consider doing a pilot program on this, is implementing a
18 biometric chip in Texas driver's licenses voluntarily for
19 people who want to pay the fee.

20 So, for example, you're in Eagle Pass and you
21 pay \$25, and when you do a lot of cross back and forth,
22 you would have your license with you, it would scan the
23 picture, look at you in the car, or let you walk across,
24 and know who you are, Mayor, and you go. So that --

25 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Now that's Senate Bill 2027.

1 MR. WILSON: Yes, that two minute exercise
2 would turn into a 15 second, yes, this is who you are, the
3 picture matches, you go through. And so we're working
4 with the Department of Homeland Security right now to
5 understand what their requirements would be to make sure
6 that it fits with what the state's able to do, and with
7 DPS to make sure that we have the technology necessary to
8 have a user fee system, because there was no appropriation
9 for this out of the gate. And hopefully we'll have some
10 kind of recommendations for the next two to three months
11 to see if we could implement that.

12 So we're trying to address that very issue that
13 with U.S. citizens coming in, at least take that part and
14 accelerate the speed so you take a substantial part of the
15 traffic, which is often crossing over into Mexico and then
16 shopping, or going out to dinner, or taking care of
17 business, seeing your family, and then coming back to the
18 U.S. side. So that's one of the ideas we're working on
19 right now.

20 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Well, you're aware that
21 Washington State was the pilot --

22 MR. WILSON: Yes, and we're --

23 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- program under that.

24 MR. WILSON: -- trying to understand that we
25 can do a very similar program to Washington State and see

1 exactly what our costs are and what's the voluntary fee we
2 have to have in order for people to participate. And it's
3 purely voluntary, but it's got to be cost supportive.

4 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Would it be more cost
5 effective than --

6 MR. WILSON: Yes, sir.

7 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- a passport?

8 MR. WILSON: Absolutely. By about a third.

9 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Yes. And, again --

10 MR. WILSON: You understand that a passport's
11 80 bucks --

12 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- that's one of --

13 MR. WILSON: -- this is 25.

14 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- the issues the U.S. Border
15 Trade Alliance and Undersecretary Ahern for DHS insulted
16 the gathering by saying the average crossing time was 45
17 seconds. All of us that live --

18 MR. WILSON: In Canada.

19 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- on the border, we pulled
20 out a watch --

21 MR. WILSON: Yes.

22 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- and the crossing time was
23 well in excess. But, again, that goes into a federal
24 issue where our border patrol's budget goes up 80 percent,
25 CBP's budget goes up 30 percent, there's just not enough

1 agents --

2 MR. WILSON: And so our --

3 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- not enough lanes --

4 MR. WILSON: -- goal is to take it back to the
5 state --

6 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Yes, so we're --

7 MR. WILSON: -- what can we do as a state to
8 help Pharr and the bridge and --

9 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Oh, these guys --

10 MR. WILSON: -- El Paso --

11 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- don't need any help. It's
12 us poor bridges that need the help.

13 MR. WILSON: Well, in a sense it's not --

14 MR. CHAD FOSTER: These guys --

15 MR. WILSON: -- expediting commerce and trade.

16 MR. CHAD FOSTER: -- don't worry about Pharr;
17 they're doing fine.

18 MR. WILSON: Yes. Great.

19 You want to go to page 2, or page 4 rather --

20 MS. ESCALANTE: Sure.

21 MR. WILSON: -- five? Coordination --

22 MS. ESCALANTE: I just -- I'm sorry. I just
23 wanted to ask a question. How many ports of entry right
24 now have sentry lanes?

25 MS. HITZFELDER: I believe there are six in

1 Texas.

2 MS. ESCALANTE: Just curious.

3 MALE VOICE: We can give you an exact number --

4 MS. ESCALANTE: Sure.

5 MALE VOICE: -- but it's --

6 MS. ESCALANTE: All right. Thank you.

7 MS. HITZFELDER: There are two in El Paso --

8 MALE VOICE: Oh, she's got her list.

9 MS. HITZFELDER: -- Laredo. I think the
10 Hidalgo-Reynosa is open now.

11 MS. ESCALANTE: Okay.

12 MR. MEDINA: The sentry lane? Yes.

13 MS. HITZFELDER: Right.

14 MR. MEDINA: Yes.

15 MS. HITZFELDER: Yes. And Brownsville.

16 MR. CHAD FOSTER: But, again, if I may
17 reiterate one thing, one of the -- we're looking at trade
18 corridors, and, again, just to reiterate, of the existing
19 trade corridors, but the that we feel needs some attention
20 and it has been historically off the map, is the Highway
21 57 corridor, because it's historically been agriculturally
22 based. But now you're -- just saying it again, just
23 trying to reiterate, we want to be sure we don't forget
24 about that corridor itself because it is developing at a
25 rather rapid clip.

1 MR. WILSON: Yes, sir.

2 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely. All right. Sorry,
3 I just wanted to clarify --

4 MR. WILSON: That's all right.

5 MS. ESCALANTE: -- the question.

6 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Because one of these days I
7 want to be like Pharr.

8 MR. WILSON: Let's go to page 5, the
9 coordination with Mexico, just any snapshot thoughts on
10 any of those issues.

11 (No response.)

12 MR. WILSON: Anything from TxDOT? Do you
13 all -- Gus, do you have anything more to say about the
14 stuff on page 5? We just touched on some of this a second
15 ago.

16 MR. De La ROSA: Would you like me to address
17 that again?

18 MS. ESCALANTE: Do you?

19 MR. WILSON: Is there anything in addition to
20 any of this on page 5, that we just talked about, kind of
21 accelerating commerce and crossings. I want to make sure
22 we didn't miss anything from a TxDOT or any of the other
23 TxDOT partners or local communities.

24 MS. ESCALANTE: In terms of coordination with
25 Mexico, I just wanted to bring something up to your

1 attention about the Mexican vehicle registry that is
2 already beginning to work in Mexico. And the idea behind
3 it -- and I'm sure that most of you are aware of it, is to
4 start a full registry so that we know where all the cars
5 are and who they belong to and whether they're stolen or
6 not, which ones are legal in Mexico, because there's a big
7 problem with illegal cars coming in to Mexico from the
8 United States, et cetera.

9 So it is my understanding that it's already
10 beginning to be implemented, although I don't know exactly
11 what that means. But it's in the last stages before it's
12 fully ran and it should be working some time very, very
13 soon.

14 MR. De La ROSA: Well, I know they've been
15 trying to implement that since the early 90s.

16 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes.

17 MR. De La ROSA: Because when I was with the
18 auto theft probation authority, that was one of their
19 goals was to implement a national registry --

20 MS. ESCALANTE: Right.

21 MR. De La ROSA: -- in Mexico.

22 MS. ESCALANTE: Exactly. And they went through
23 various cycles, and some of them ended quite tragically --

24 MR. De La ROSA: Yes.

25 MS. ESCALANTE: -- you know, but I believe

1 this -- or at least this one is the one that seems to be
2 giving good results at this point. And if you wanted to,
3 what I can do is also bring you an update, a specific
4 update as to where we are today, October 26, and
5 distribute that to everybody.

6 All right. Let's see, we've gone through
7 coordination with Mexico. Anybody else who'd like to add
8 anything? Anything good, anything challenging, issues?

9 (No response.)

10 MS. ESCALANTE: All right. Then let's go to
11 page 7, safety and security measures.

12 MS. STONE: Helena, on that subject, I just
13 want to mention that one of our metropolitan planning --
14 actually I think two of our metropolitan planning
15 organizations have memorandums of understanding, or
16 international planners on their staff, Pharr and Reynosa.
17 Right? And Hidalgo County and Reynosa, and then El Paso
18 and Juarez have international planners.

19 MR. WILSON: Hold on to your wallet.

20 MS. STONE: So that's some coordination with --

21 MR. WILSON: Great.

22 MS. STONE: -- infrastructure.

23 MS. ESCALANTE: Oh, okay. Very, very good.

24 Anybody else who would like to add something?

25 MR. MEDINA: Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. ESCALANTE: Sure.

2 MR. MEDINA: If I may? One of the problems
3 that we have on our bridge is that --

4 MR. CHAD FOSTER: We need more cashiers.

5 MR. MEDINA: But I -- yes -- would solicit
6 assistance on -- from somebody that could -- that may be
7 able to provide me with some instruction on what to do.
8 And it's on the Mexican side.

9 One of the problems at our bridge that
10 interferes with commercial traffic is that the bridge is
11 designated on the Mexican side as a bridge for chocolate
12 cars, for illegal cars in Mexico, or that don't have their
13 papers. They get their customs stamp at our bridge.

14 Well, these vehicles come into our bridge and
15 then get in line on the Mexican -- to -- for Mexican
16 customers and block commercial traffic. And it happens --
17 it's pretty much a daily problem for us. And we've
18 solicited the Mexican government to change the designation
19 to another bridge that doesn't have as much traffic,
20 maybe, or --

21 MR. CHAD FOSTER: No, no.

22 MR. MEDINA: -- because of the major
23 interference it has on commercial southbound traffic. And
24 we've talked to SRE, and I don't know just what -- where
25 else to go to ask them to limit that, or change the

1 designation to another bridge so that it doesn't interfere
2 and stop commercial -- basically what it does it stops
3 commercial traffic, so it stops the lanes. And it takes a
4 while before the --

5 MR. WILSON: Can you do --

6 MR. MEDINA: -- goes up there and straightens it
7 out.

8 MR. WILSON: -- me a favor, please? Can you
9 write me a letter outlining in great detail so I can get
10 my head wrapped around it, and then we'll talk with our
11 division and some of our counterparts on the federal side
12 to see what possible solutions -- but I need to understand
13 it better.

14 And then -- and we were with President
15 Calderon -- Scott, what, six weeks ago --

16 MR. HAYWOOD: Uh-huh.

17 MR. WILSON: -- in Mexico City.

18 MR. MEDINA: It's a presidential decree --

19 MR. WILSON: Right. So I would follow up with
20 their foreign minister, who I met, to see what the options
21 are. But I need to understand it better before I can --

22 MR. MEDINA: Okay.

23 MR. WILSON: -- really take action. So I think
24 I've got a little grasp, but if I read more and then
25 follow up with maybe a phone call with you, or maybe your

1 counterparts, I can do a better job of grasping it.

2 MR. MEDINA: Well, thank you. Appreciate
3 anything you --

4 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Well, if you push that
5 commercial traffic over to Eagle Pass, then you wouldn't
6 be challenged by those issues.

7 MR. MEDINA: Well, we don't want to do is
8 interfere with the commercial traffic.

9 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely. So, I'm sorry,
10 just to clarify, so all those chocolate cars are crossing
11 in --

12 MR. WILSON: I keep thinking of chocolate cars.

13 MS. ESCALANTE: Oh, here's -- this is what --
14 the reason -- well --

15 MR. WILSON: I keep -- I get hungry when I hear
16 about a car called a chocolate car.

17 MS. ESCALANTE: That's right. And the reason
18 why they call them that is because -- well, there's two
19 theories behind it -- and this is just complete trivia --
20 there's two theories.

21 One is the Forest Gump trivia which is with a
22 chocolate car, which is like a box of chocolates, you
23 never know what you're going to get because it's a car
24 that has, you know, salvage title here, or were Katrina
25 cars that were here flooded, don't work anymore, and they

1 buy them here for nothing, for pennies on the dollar, they
2 take them to Mexico, they sell them as is, where is, no
3 warranties, but you never know if they're going to get to
4 the corner or they're going to give you years of valuable
5 service. So that's one of the theories.

6 The other one, and that's the one that I
7 subscribe to, is they used to go into Mexico and they used
8 to be the, what would you call it, the crooked cars. The
9 word for that in Mexico is *chueco*. And so the nickname
10 for *chueco* eventually turned into chocolate, just to refer
11 to them.

12 MR. MEDINA: They're not legal.

13 MR. WILSON: So --

14 MS. ESCALANTE: They're not -- yes, they're not
15 edible.

16 MR. WILSON: They're not edible. So are the
17 cars -- you said they were on the Mexican side, are they
18 cars that have come from the United States into Mexico --

19 MR. MEDINA: No.

20 MR. WILSON: -- that are stopping, or coming
21 back --

22 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes.

23 MR. WILSON: Where are they?

24 MR. MEDINA: They turn on the bridge and get in
25 line, the commercial line. And so --

1 MR. WILSON: Why?

2 MR. MEDINA: Because --

3 MR. WILSON: Where are they trying to go?

4 MR. MEDINA: They don't have to go into the
5 United States; they really don't want to because they
6 probably don't have a title to it --

7 MR. WILSON: So they --

8 MR. MEDINA: -- they just want to get the
9 stamp --

10 MR. WILSON: Right.

11 MR. MEDINA: -- so they've got to go through --

12 MR. WILSON: So I'm just trying to make sure
13 I'm following --

14 MR. MEDINA: The cars in Mexico --

15 MR. WILSON: So a car in Mexico that somebody
16 bought that's a chocolate car --

17 MR. MEDINA: Yes.

18 MR. WILSON: -- drives to the bridge --

19 MR. MEDINA: Yes.

20 MR. WILSON: -- and they get there. What
21 happens then?

22 MR. MEDINA: They turn around, go back into
23 Mexico without crossing to the United States --

24 MALE VOICE: No bridge fare for Pharr.

25 MR. WILSON: Right.

1 MR. MEDINA: And they get in line, and it's a
2 thousand cars, you know, so --

3 MR. WILSON: What are they -- what do they need
4 the stamp for? That's what I'm trying to understand.

5 MR. MEDINA: To be able to what they call
6 [indiscernible] the vehicle in order to be able to take it
7 to get it --

8 MR. MARTINEZ: Some semblance of --

9 MR. MEDINA: -- to get it registered.

10 MR. MARTINEZ: -- legitimacy.

11 MR. MEDINA: It's got to be stamped.

12 MR. WILSON: And so why does it have to be
13 stamped at the bridge?

14 MR. MEDINA: Because of the presidential decree
15 that that bridge is where you get the stamp.

16 MR. WILSON: So --

17 MS. ESCALANTE: It's illegal, but you go get
18 the stamp and then --

19 MR. WILSON: You become legal?

20 MS. ESCALANTE: -- that gives you -- exactly,
21 quote unquote.

22 MR. WILSON: So I'm illegal --

23 MR. MARTINEZ: So you physically have to cross
24 the bridge?

25 MR. MEDINA: No, they don't cross to the United

1 States.

2 MR. MARTINEZ: Okay.

3 MR. WILSON: So they could -- not to -- they
4 could create a separate area with its own staff, they have
5 their own staffing system --

6 MR. MEDINA: And they've tried that, but the
7 presidential decree specifies that it has to be at the
8 bridge.

9 MR. WILSON: But I'm just saying, they could do
10 that.

11 MR. MEDINA: Yes, they could. If it would
12 change.

13 MR. WILSON: So if the presidential decree
14 said, We're going to move all the chocolate cars five
15 miles away and create our own substation with an officer
16 who can give the stamp --

17 MR. MEDINA: That would be the ideal thing.

18 MR. WILSON: So make the recommendation to me
19 on what you think the ideal thing would be, and we'll see
20 what we can find out.

21 MR. MEDINA: Okay.

22 MR. WILSON: Great.

23 MS. ESCALANTE: And this is for latest decree,
24 the one that Fox signed in 2005 -- right? -- in August of
25 2005ish?

1 MR. MEDINA: Yes, and that's another thing,
2 that the cars that are so many years -- I think it's five
3 years back, those can be changed from chocolate to normal,
4 I mean, to regular cars.

5 MR. WILSON: Isn't it amazing, like magic
6 power.

7 MS. GUERRA: Are these mostly Mexican cars,
8 or --

9 MR. MEDINA: No, they're U.S. cars --

10 MS. GUERRA: Yes, but how did they get over
11 there in the first place?

12 MS. ESCALANTE: Right.

13 MR. MEDINA: They're already over there.
14 They --

15 MS. GUERRA: But you're not -- they've
16 gotten --

17 MS. ESCALANTE: Some of them are --

18 MR. MEDINA: They've crossed with Texas --

19 MS. GUERRA: -- stamped --

20 MR. MEDINA: -- license -- no, they crossed --

21 MS. GUERRA: No?

22 MR. MEDINA: -- with Texas plates, or by
23 illegal means.

24 MR. WILSON: That is great. I don't know how
25 it got here, but we're going to make it legitimate.

1 MS. ESCALANTE: There's two ways to get them
2 down there. The first one is the -- well, it could be
3 truly the legal way: You go through the Mexican consulate
4 here to get your permit; they give a permit for about 180
5 days. You go to Mexico and then you just leave it there.

6 So at the end of those 180 days, the car is illegal, but
7 so it just stays there because you give it to your family,
8 or something like that.

9 Another way they do it is they cross those cars
10 through what are called [indiscernible], which are just --
11 how do you --

12 MR. MEDINA: Farm roads.

13 MS. ESCALANTE: -- farm roads, if you may, not
14 through the bridges. And that is just for, what would you
15 call it, personal or individual vehicles. The way they
16 take trucks across, because obviously they are much
17 bigger, is they disassemble them and then they pass them
18 in parts, and then they sell the parts in Mexico, or they
19 reassemble it.

20 MR. MEDINA: Reassemble it.

21 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Now you have a tremendous
22 grasp of that operation --

23 MR. WILSON: You know, Mayor, I was thinking
24 the very same thing. Helena knows a lot about cars.

25 MR. CHAD FOSTER: We may put you on some

1 consultation there.

2 MS. ESCALANTE: Exactly.

3 MR. WILSON: If she gets a wrench out, we get
4 really worried.

5 MR. CHAD FOSTER: And after all the lobbying
6 we've done to President Calderon, it looks like it's
7 finally given us some results.

8 MR. WILSON: Absolutely

9 MS. ESCALANTE: Oh, my god.

10 MR. WILSON: Well, let's -- give me a letter,
11 and we'll start to see if we can think through how the
12 options are.

13 MR. MEDINA: Thank you.

14 MR. WILSON: Anything on that section we need
15 to talk about?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. WILSON: Let's go to page 10.

18 MS. ESCALANTE: Okay. All right. So we are
19 done with 7, 8, 9, 10. Okay. So this is category B, or
20 strategy B, economic benefits of international trade.
21 Demonstrate economic benefits of international trade at
22 the national, state and local levels.

23 MR. WILSON: I think this is coming up on our
24 division, the economic development office the governor's
25 doing. Right?

1 MS. ESCALANTE: Absolutely.

2 MR. WILSON: Okay.

3 MS. ESCALANTE: And while everybody has a
4 little bit to contribute, I think overall, you know, to
5 perform any kind of economic impact analysis of trade on
6 local and national levels, that certainly falls under the
7 state's purview.

8 MR. WILSON: Right. Why don't we set a time
9 line for us to consider seeing where we are from last year
10 to now --

11 MS. ESCALANTE: Okay.

12 MR. WILSON: -- and then putting an executive
13 summary level together, not a long paper, on these
14 actionable items on the 10 section to try to get back to
15 everybody what 10 means to you, for all of us in the
16 month.

17 MS. ESCALANTE: Sure.

18 MR. WILSON: I think we've got some -- we've
19 got a lot of this data already. We just need to quantify
20 it to share it with the board and committee members.

21 MS. ESCALANTE: Right. Why don't say by the
22 beginning of December?

23 MR. WILSON: Great. Especially in 10.1 and
24 10.2.

25 MS. ESCALANTE: Also, Tammy was kind enough to

1 let me know that those members whose term had expired,
2 according to this, in 2007, have been reappointed.

3 MR. WILSON: Okay.

4 MS. ESCALANTE: So they're the positions and
5 whoever is holding that position has been reappointed.

6 MR. WILSON: Great.

7 MS. ESCALANTE: so we still have a full
8 committee, and, well, that's all we have.

9 MR. WILSON: Anybody have any closing comments,
10 thoughts?

11 Yes, sir?

12 MR. GALVAN: Just a brief one. My name again,
13 Joe Galvan. I represent the Brownsville-Matamoros Bridge.
14 We're a combination rail, auto, pedestrian bridge. We're
15 sort of unique on the border in that we have 100 percent
16 of the operations. We are 100 percent toll collectors, we
17 are the U.S. toll collectors, and we have responsibility
18 for the entire -- I mean, the operation of the entire
19 stamp from one side to the other.

20 We -- first of all, I'm glad that eventually
21 here we're going to be addressing the, I guess, retail
22 trade, the private auto crossings, because it's, I think,
23 just as important as foot traffic. We keep track of the
24 time waits. They're nowhere close to what U.S. Customs
25 posts on their website.

1 We do it the old fashioned way. We have three
2 incoming toll lanes and every 15 minutes we have the toll
3 collectors ask six people, so every 15 minutes we get 15
4 to 20 samples of the wait time. And some are exaggerated,
5 depending on how late they're running, or how many kids
6 they've got in the car.

7 But on the average we have seen it, over the
8 past year, rise from 20, 25, 30 minute wait times during
9 peak to now maybe 45 to an hour in increases for wait
10 times. And we have not even seen yet the Friday after
11 Thanksgiving or the holidays coming up here.

12 We -- it's in our best interest to keep track
13 of the wait times. We don't have the technology,
14 obviously, to track it any other way, but we figure an
15 average sampling, you know, works for us. And we use that
16 to pass it back on to U.S. Customs, because obviously when
17 they compare their figures they might be different.

18 It's in our best interest to have maximum
19 private car, I guess, or private vehicle inspector lanes
20 fully operational because that's what drives the traffic
21 across, not necessarily the toll collectors. So we work
22 constantly and we actually share our information with U.S.
23 Customs on that.

24 And obviously what will work in the future will
25 be additional toll -- actually inspection lanes because I

1 think technology -- to be honest with you, I think sentry
2 works well if you've got enough capacity to put enough
3 lanes. But if you try to combine sentry, fast and a
4 regular commercial lane, where do you put the regular
5 cars.

6 And if you've got limited, you know, and I'm
7 sure there's several international bridges where you cross
8 on one side and it's three lanes, now all of sudden you
9 run into -- or two lanes, and all of sudden you're running
10 into a third lane coming in the wrong direction. So I
11 think better coordination obviously between the U.S. side
12 and the Mexican side is essential. We have that
13 coordination because we are the Mexican side, so.

14 And basically I'd just like to be able to work
15 with anyone that's trying to keep track of those figures,
16 because for us the time waiting is a customer-service
17 information that we need, and then we pass it on to the
18 ones that drive the wait times.

19 MS. ESCALANTE: Thank you. Very good.
20 Definitely it will be billed. Right?

21 MR. GALVAN: Right. Yes. We need to visit, we
22 need to learn something from you.

23 MR. WILSON: Anyone else?

24 MS. ESCALANTE: All right.

25 (No response.)

1 MR. WILSON: We need to set the meeting --

2 MS. ESCALANTE: Anything else?

3 MR. WILSON: -- the next meeting.

4 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes. Definitely.

5 MR. WILSON: In January.

6 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes.

7 MR. WILSON: Great.

8 MS. ESCALANTE: The beginning of -- does
9 everybody have a calendar -- or can I --

10 MR. WILSON: We're going to try to set the next
11 meeting right now, looking in January.

12 (Pause.)

13 MS. ESCALANTE: Calendar right here.

14 MR. WILSON: And we will get the notice out
15 today, so we'll give all our non-attending members as much
16 time as possible so we'll have a quorum to then adopt some
17 of the things that we're working on between now and
18 then --

19 MS. ESCALANTE: Right.

20 MR. WILSON: -- and spend some more time
21 actually chewing through some of those recommendations
22 since we actually could have an official meeting then with
23 a quorum.

24 MS. ESCALANTE: Okay.

25 MS. STONE: And all the information that was

1 requested will be going out before the meeting.

2 MR. WILSON: Right. Exactly. Let me ask you
3 all a question, for those who have to travel, you know,
4 Friday's always kind of a hard day I think in some ways
5 for people. Does the beginning of the week work better
6 for our out of town guests, a Monday or Tuesday?

7 MR. CHAD FOSTER: As long as it's not the first
8 Tuesday.

9 MR. WILSON: Because you've got to run your
10 city council meeting?

11 MS. ESCALANTE: Oh, okay.

12 MR. WILSON: So if we looked at like the 14th
13 is a Monday --

14 MR. CHAD FOSTER: Monday's a great day to get
15 out.

16 MR. WILSON: Right. Does January 14 work for
17 everyone thought-wise? Is that enough notice?

18 MS. GUERRA: Not the second Monday, please.

19 MR. WILSON: Not the second Monday.

20 MS. GUERRA: That's our commissioner's court.

21 MR. WILSON: All right. Let's go to -- how
22 about -- now this should be Monday and Tuesday, January
23 16 -- I can't do that myself.

24 MS. ESCALANTE: How about the -- let's see, the
25 28th, 29th?

1 MR. WILSON: How about the 23rd?

2 MR. MARTINEZ: MLK Day is on the 21st.

3 MR. WILSON: Is it?

4 MR. MARTINEZ: I think the 21st is MLK Day.

5 MR. WILSON: I said the 23rd.

6 MR. MARTINEZ: Okay.

7 MR. WILSON: The 23rd of January. That's a
8 Wednesday. That cuts the baby in half. It's not Monday
9 or Tuesday, and it's not Friday. Right. Why don't we
10 tentatively set it for January 23.

11 MS. ESCALANTE: Okay.

12 MR. WILSON: And we'll get a location and time
13 and everything to you very soon.

14 Tammy, does that work for you all? TxDOT?

15 MS. STONE: Yes, sir. It may be a problem for
16 Amadeo. I'm sorry.

17 MR. WILSON: Well, his life's kind of busy.

18 MS. STONE: Yes. If that's okay.

19 MR. WILSON: Sure.

20 MS. STONE: I just want to say it may be a
21 problem --

22 MR. WILSON: I understand that.

23 MS. STONE: -- for him right now because of --
24 I think we have a commission meeting the next day.

25 MR. WILSON: Okay.

1 MS. ESCALANTE: All right.

2 MR. MEDINA: Same time?

3 MR. WILSON: We'll -- no, no -- yes, we can
4 tentative hold it for now, but let's -- we'll get the --

5 MS. ESCALANTE: We have to get a place.

6 MR. WILSON: Right.

7 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes.

8 MR. WILSON: The 23rd of January.

9 MR. MEDINA: Same location?

10 MR. WILSON: We'll get a place for you. It
11 could be here, but we'll get that to you.

12 MS. ESCALANTE: Yes, we'll get that to you. We
13 need to make sure what's available.

14 MR. WILSON: Anything else from anybody?

15 (No response.)

16 MR. WILSON: You all thanks for being here. We
17 hope -- we'll get all this information to you. Also, if
18 you've got assignments, please start sending stuff back
19 and forth to Tammy, and we hope to have kind of an
20 executive summary, I hope at least two weeks before the
21 meeting, if that's at all possible --

22 MS. STONE: That's fine.

23 MR. WILSON: -- to get -- you have enough time
24 to read and reflect and take notes on it and come back
25 with, or any kind of decisions the committee needs to make

1 in the 23rd meeting.

2 Okay. Thank you all very much.

3 (Whereupon, at 12:15 p.m., the meeting was
4 concluded.)

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MEETING OF: TxDOT Border Trade Advisory Committee

LOCATION: Austin, Texas

DATE: October 26, 2007

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbers 1 through 58, inclusive, are the true, accurate, and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording made by electronic recording by Penny Bynum before the Texas Department of Transportation.

(Transcriber) 10/30/2007
(Date)

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