

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4022

As Reported by House Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development

Brief Description: Urging Canadian and United States authorities to address border issues.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Morris, Barlean, Schual-Berke, Kessler, Conway, Lysen, O'Brien, Benson, Schmidt, Ballasiotes, Kenney and Ericksen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 2/5/02, 2/7/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Petitions the president of the United States, the Canadian ambassador to the United States, and Congress to develop measures that will ensure both security and prosperity for citizens of both countries.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Veloria, Chair; Eickmeyer, Vice Chair; Ahern, Chase, Dunn, Fromhold, Gombosky and Mulliken.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background:

The border between the United States and Canada is the longest undefended border in the world. The two countries have enjoyed years of free flowing transfer of goods between the two countries. The state of Washington is dependent upon international trade. The bulk of Washington's trade with Canada passes through the land borders between Washington and British Columbia.

The events of September 11, 2001 have heightened the need for security along the border between the United States and Canada. On December 12, 2001 Tom Ridge, the Director of U.S. Homeland Security and John Manley, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada signed a 30- point agreement that encourages regional and bi-national approaches to address border issues.

The state of Washington, as a member of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) that includes the neighboring Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and the Yukon, is involved in the development and implementation of pilot programs to enhance security and efficiency at its borders with Canada.

Summary of Bill:

The Senate and the House of Representatives of the state of Washington petition the president of the United States, the Canadian ambassador to the United States, the president of the United States Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the state of Washington that the federal governments of the United States and Canada take urgent practical measures to develop a border that will ensure both security and prosperity for citizens of both countries.

These measures include: (a) exploring mechanisms that increase security, reduce risk, and save money; (b) working closely with local jurisdictions to develop solutions and increase cooperation in border management; (c) implementing secure pre-clearance systems and advanced technology to assist legitimate trade and travel; (d) improving levels of staffing at border crossings; and (e) eliminating duplication of and actively sharing information wherever possible.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: This region has a long history of working together to increase security and promote the free movement of trade across the U.S. and Canadian border. Due the events of September 11, 2001, the federal governments of the United States and Canada are now looking at increased security measures. We have been working on border crossing issues for over 10 years and have developed a good working relationship with the Canadian provinces. We have ideas that the federal governments should consider as they work to address security, but not unduly hamper the movement of goods between the two countries.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Linville, prime sponsor; and Representative Morris.