

Border Trade Alliance applauds creation of border infrastructure funding category in Texas state budget

Governor Abbott signs state budget into law, allowing for new infrastructure mechanism

SAN ANTONIO – Texas Gov. Greg Abbot on Saturday signed HB 1 into law, an over \$209 billion budget bill to fund state government operations.

Tucked into the massive two-year budget is a provision that creates a new border infrastructure funding category within the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

"With dedicated federal resources for border infrastructure running dry, we are thankful that Texas is stepping up to address important issues like border infrastructure that the federal government is either unable or unwilling to take on," Border Trade Alliance Chairman Jesse Hereford said.

The BTA, a nearly 30-year-old organization that advocates for policies that encourage increased cross-border trade, thanked Gov. Abbott for allowing the transportation provision to remain in the budget. The BTA also worked closely with state Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, who shepherded the legislation through the budget process, as well as Senators José Rodríguez and Carlos Uresti.

The BTA, whose private and public sector members in Texas stretch from El Paso to Brownsville, cited the budget's transportation language as an example of border-wide cooperation.

"This legislation would not have been possible without a strong commitment to regional cooperation," Cameron County Judge and BTA Board Member Pete Sepulveda said. "The Texas-Mexico border is more competitive when our communities work together. Cameron County and the cities of McAllen, Pharr, Laredo, Del Rio, and the private Starr-Camargo International Bridge in Rio Grande City and El Paso's Borderplex Alliance all worked to get this legislation across the finish line."

Rigoberto Villarreal, the superintendent for the McAllen-Hidalgo and Anzalduas International Bridges and BTA Board Member, said Sen. Hinojosa's support was integral to the legislation reaching passage.

"The international bridges of our region are now poised to have new tools in our toolbox for ensuring our infrastructure keeps pace with the growing demands of today's trade volumes," Villarreal said. "Sen. Hinojosa deserves our thanks for his hard work to advance this bill to the governor's desk. Here in McAllen, we appreciate Mayor Jim Darling, who played a key role in raising the profile of this important issue."



The idea for a TxDOT funding stream dedicated to border infrastructure got rolling in El Paso, a major Texas trade hub that has seen consistent infrastructure challenges.

“This new way to work with TxDOT to improve the infrastructure that is so central to our community’s economic health is a major win for the El Paso region,” Borderplex Alliance CEO and BTA Board Member Rolando Pablos said. “I want to thank state Sen. José Rodríguez for his vision to introduce the legislation that found its way into the final budget package. El Paso and the entire Texas-Mexico border region will benefit from this important new law.”

The BTA will be working closely with TxDOT over the coming months as the rules and funding formulas under the new law take shape.

About the Border Trade Alliance

Since 1986, the BTA has served as a grassroots, non-profit organization that provides a forum for discussion and advocacy on issues pertaining to the environment, border development, quality of life and trade in the Americas. A network of public and private sector representatives from the United States, Mexico and Canada, BTA’s core values include a commitment to improving the quality of life of border communities through trade and commerce.

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