

Approved: 3 -17 -99
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rep. Gary Hayzlett at 1:40 p.m. on March 3, 1999 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Thimesch, excused
Representative Hermes, excused

Committee staff present:

Bruce Kinzie, Revisor
Hank Avila, Research
Ellie Luthye, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Max Zimmerman, SPIRIT
Carlos Ramirez, Mayor, El Paso, Texas

Others attending:

See attached sheet

Chairman Hayzlett called on Max Zimmerman, SPIRIT, to introduce Carlos Ramirez, Mayor of El Paso, who would speak to the committee regarding the Highway 54 project.

Mayor Ramirez told the committee that US Highway 54 is the most traveled 2-lane highway in the United States and is a favorite route for truckers and motorists because it reduces the travel distance from El Paso to Wichita by 120 miles each way. He said it was important to solidify a multi-state partnership in order to create a major international trade corridor. He supported the proposal set forth by SPIRIT stating the proposal would create new jobs, provide redevelopment opportunities, improve the quality of life while accommodating the truck traffic that the Southwest and Midwest are experiencing due to the increasing trade with Mexico. (Attachment 1)

Mayor Ramirez answered questions from the committee.

Three sets of minutes from the Joint House and Senate Transportation Committees were presented for corrections or approval. If there are no objections by the 5th of March these minutes will stand approved as presented.

Chairman Hayzlett adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m. The next meeting of the House Transportation Committee will be Tuesday, March 9, 1999 at 1:30 p.m.

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: March 3, 1999

NAME	REPRESENTING
MIKE WILKESAJ	KDOT
Tom WHITAKER	Ks MOTOR CARRIERS ASSN.
Elaine Berns	Intern. Rep. Fluor
Jack Taylor	Liberal Chamber of Commerce
Theresa Wendt	Liberal Hwy 54
Nellynda Holmes	Liberal - Hwy 54
Roy Sulgaral	EL PASO MPO
Max Zimmerman	Liberal - SPIRIT / US 54

Outline of Mayor Ramirez
Presentation
March 3, 1999

City of El Paso, Texas - Population 600,000 - 15th Largest city in U.S.
County of El Paso - Population 200,000
Ciudad, Juarez, Mexico - Population 1.3 Million - 4th Largest city in Mexico

1. Mayor Carlos Ramirez of El Paso, Texas, the largest metropolitan area on the U.S.-Mexico border, will present testimony in support of the U.S. Highway 54 - Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional and Interstate Transportation (S.P.I.R.I.T.) proposal. The mayor will discuss the importance of solidifying a multi-state partnership in order to create a major international trade corridor.
2. The mayor will highlight several facts and figures that highlight the potential that the S.P.I.R.I.T. proposal has in terms of creating new jobs, providing redevelopment opportunities, improving quality of life while accommodating the truck traffic that the Southwest and Midwest are experiencing due to the increasing trade with Mexico.
3. The mayor will present El Paso's vision for the future of international trade and how the S.P.I.R.I.T. proposal is an integral part of that plan.

SUPPORTING FACTS & FIGURES:

- * Since NAFTA was implemented in 1994, total two-way trade through Texas ports has grown 56%.
- * In 1997, total U.S. trade with Mexico accounted for approximately 11% or, \$176 billion, of the total U.S. trade to all countries.
- * Eleven of the 27 U.S.-Mexico port-of-entries are in Texas, including the top two - Laredo and El Paso. Their combined trade with Mexico equaled \$101.8 billion in 1997 and represented 75% of the total trade at the border.
- * In 1997, El Paso, handled 17.7% share of the total U.S.-Mexico trade, or \$24.2 billion (\$10.1 billion in exports and \$14.1 billion in imports).
- * Ciudad Juarez is home to approximately 276 twin plants or maquilas. These maquilas employ over 214,000 workers, the most of any city in Mexico.
- * Between 1968 and 1997 northbound freight traffic increased 800% (65,074 trucks in 1968 - 586,707 trucks in 1997).
- * Between 1989 and 1997 the Customs Value for General Imports across the El Paso District increased from \$5.4 Billion to \$15.3 Billion.
- * In the U.S., 80% of all trade with Mexico moves by truck. In El Paso, approximately 96% of all trade is handled by trucks.

PRESS RELEASE

Purpose of the US Highway 54 Conference (S.P.I.R.I.T.):

- * US Highway 54 is the most traveled 2-lane highway in the United States. This highway is a favorite route for truckers and motorists because it reduces the travel distance from El Paso, Texas to Wichita, Kansas by 120 miles each way. The purpose of the April meeting is to bring together high ranking federal, state, county, and local officials from a multi-state (Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas) region to promote the upgrading of US Highway 54 from two lanes to four lanes from El Paso, Texas to Wichita, Kansas.
- * To provide a setting in which high ranking federal, state, county, local, and Mexican officials in the region can dialogue, coordinate and develop transportation strategies consistent with the goals and criteria described in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).
- * To educate federal, state, county, local, and Mexican officials on the importance of working together to develop a highway network that encourages regional, national, and international connectivity.
- * To develop public awareness on the importance that widening U.S. Highway 54 will have in relieving congestion along Texas' major transportation corridors such as Interstate Highways 10, 25, 35 and 40.

We plan to invite the Secretaries of Transportation from New Mexico (Pete Rahn), Kansas (Dean Carlson), Texas (Charles Heald) and Oklahoma (Neal McCaleb) to speak at this very important conference. This is probably the first time in history that these four transportation executives will be brought together to promote the intrastate, interstate and international benefits of a transportation project like U.S. Highway 54.