

THE SENATE OF TEXAS

COMMITTEES:

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, VICE-CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL AFFAIRS
EDUCATION
FINANCE
TRANSPORTATION



CAPITOL OFFICE:
3E.2 • P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0118

LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2016

Contact: Matthew Russell
512-463-0118

Senator Kolkhorst Appointed Chair of Committee to Study the Development of a Cruise Industry on the South Texas Coast

AUSTIN - Today, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick named a newly-created Joint Interim Committee to Study the Development of a Cruise Industry on the South Texas coast. He named Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) as chair and Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) as vice-chair.

Comprised of five members from both the Senate and House, the committee is charged with considering how Texas could develop a cruise industry between Calhoun and Cameron Counties. Along with Kolkhorst and Hinojosa other members from the Senate will include Senator Joan Huffman (R - Houston), Senator Eduardo "Eddie" Lucio, Jr. (D - Brownsville), and Senator Larry Taylor (R -Friendswood). The committee was formed as a result of House Concurrent Resolution 108 authored by State Representative Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi).

"Currently the cruise industry in North America is dominated by Florida and California, with nine ports between them. This committee is seeking to change that statistic," said Kolkhorst. "We will be studying the possibility of a new cruise ship port between Calhoun and Cameron Counties. There are several deep-water ports along the South Texas Coast and we intend to study all of them carefully. Expanding the Texas cruise industry could generate billions for our state economy. I look forward to working with my Senate and House colleagues on this important issue."

Cruise operations in the Texas port of Galveston have created an enormous economic impact, with the city hosting more than 900,000 passenger and crew visits annually and \$1.2 billion in direct spending. In addition, the cruise industry was responsible for generating over 20,000 Texas jobs and paying \$1.16 billion in wages.

"With three major deep-water ports along the Texas gulf coast and the economic vitality of South Texas, the further development of the cruise industry will only add to Texas' robust tourism and thriving economy. I'm looking forward to the recommendations Senate Chair Kolkhorst and committee will provide," said Lieutenant Governor Patrick.

With nearly a third of the Texas coastline in her district, Senator Kolkhorst also serves on the Joint Interim Committee to Study a Coastal Barrier System as well as the Senate Select Committee on Texas Ports.

###

