



THE SENATE OF TEXAS

MORGAN LAMANTIA

DISTRICT 27

A Statement from Senator Morgan LaMantia on the Temporary Closure of the Veterans International Bridge

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2023

CONTACT

Reed Johnson, Chief of Staff
(512) 463-0127

AUSTIN, TX — Senator Morgan LaMantia (D-South Padre Island) issued the following statement regarding the vehicle safety inspections at the Veterans International Bridge and Los Indios Bridge by DPS in Brownsville, Texas.

“The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has effectively shut down the Veterans International Bridge and Los Indios Bridge for vehicle safety inspections on the route from Matamoros into Brownsville. Earlier this week, the estimated wait time for regular northbound crossing was two hours, but due to these recent inspections, transporting vehicles have been in line for up to 26 hours. The number of trucks crossing daily has plummeted from around 1,000 to a mere 5, further causing a profound impact on the local economy and the livelihoods of individuals and businesses across the State of Texas.

The inspections are being used to enforce commercial motor vehicle safety regulations. DPS has not conducted full-scale commercial truck inspections at ports of entry since April 2022. Although there has not been a significant increase or concern regarding truck safety in Brownsville, these safety inspections were recently implemented in response to a surge of migrant crossings from Matamoros to pressure Mexican authorities to collaborate with Texas on managing such crossings, as was done in April.

Inspections at the ports of entry are not being applied elsewhere in any of the 12 commercial crossings in the State of Texas. Many of the trucks that would normally cross at Brownsville are diverting to Pharr, which is currently not subject to inspections. The disparity in inspection practices has caused a severe disruption in supply chains, with Brownsville bearing the brunt of the negative effects, threatening to set a dangerous precedent that could potentially spread to other international bridges across the Rio Grande River.

These inspections are an attack on Texas businesses and the state itself, as they will inevitably incur significant costs, just as they did in the past year. There are many state inspection sites for trucks all along our highways, yet employing this practice directly at our ports of entry has and will have astronomical impacts across our community and the rest of the state. We understand that enforcing Texas laws at our borders and ensuring the safety of our road is of the utmost importance. However, Texas should not strive to impede commerce unnecessarily, but rather work with the U.S. Border Patrol & Customs at our land ports in accomplishing such goals.

The future of trade and commerce in Texas depends on the ability of these communities to operate effectively and efficiently, and it is our duty to support them in achieving that goal. It is imperative that DPS take immediate action to cease these inspections and work towards finding a more effective and efficient solution that upholds safety regulations while minimizing negative impacts on trade and commerce. Failure to do so will result in dire consequences for the State of Texas, as well as for the United States' cross-border relations with Mexico.”

###