

- SUBJECT:** Annexing San Patricio County to the Port of Corpus Christi Authority
- COMMITTEE:** Transportation — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Krusee, Hamric, Garza, Harper-Brown, Mercer
0 nays
4 absent — Phillips, Edwards, Hill, Laney
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, May 6 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** Acts of the 68th Legislature, ch. 397 governs the port commission of the Port of Corpus Christi Authority of Nueces County. The commission comprises seven members, four appointed by the commissioners court of Nueces County and three appointed by the Corpus Christi city council. Port commissioners serve staggered three-year terms.
- DIGEST:** SB 1934 would require the San Patricio County commissioners court to call and hold an election on a uniform election date in 2003 regarding the annexation of San Patricio County to the Port of Corpus Christi Authority. The election would have to be conducted in accordance with laws governing annexation elections for navigation districts.
- If a majority of voters favored annexing San Patricio County, the commission of the Port of Corpus Christi Authority would have to enter and have recorded an order of annexation. If voters did not approve annexation, a confirmation election could be held every five years until voters approved it.
- If voters approved the annexation, the port commission would have seven members. The Nueces County commissioners court and the Corpus Christi city council each would appoint three members, and the San Patricio County commissioners court would appoint one member. Commissioners serving at the time of annexation would continue to serve until their terms expired, unless otherwise removed as provided by law. The San Patricio County

commissioners court would appoint a member to fill the first vacancy created by the expiration of a term of a commissioner who had been appointed by Nueces County commissioners. If the annexation was approved, any subsequent election would have to be held in the authority as a whole, rather than on a county-by-county basis.

SB 1934 also would require a port commissioner to file a financial statement with the Texas Ethics Commission. This statement would be a public record.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

SB 1934 would allow voters in San Patricio County to authorize annexing the county to the service area of the Port of Corpus Christi, thus expanding an important economic development engine for the community surrounding Corpus Christi. Several facilities in San Patricio County depend on the port, and county residents need to have a voice on the port commission.

SB 1934 is a product of intense negotiation among local jurisdictions and elected officials and would offer a compromise approach that all affected jurisdictions in South Texas can support. The City of Corpus Christi and Nueces and San Patricio counties have passed resolutions supporting the annexation ballot language and port commission makeup proposed in SB 1934. Each entity recognizes the importance of the port for the South Texas economy and the need to encourage its expansion.

By requiring that each port commissioner file a financial disclosure statement with the Texas Ethics Commission, the bill would improve transparency in the administration of the Port of Corpus Christi.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

It would be inappropriate for the proposed annexation election to be held exclusively in San Patricio County, since the annexation also would affect Nueces County residents. Over the years, Nueces County and Corpus Christi have invested substantially in the Port of Corpus Christi, and residents of those entities should have a voice in this new direction for the port.