



Senate Fiscal Agency  
P. O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL



ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383  
Fax: (517) 373-1986  
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 4724 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Representative Phillip Pavlov  
House Committee: Commerce  
Senate Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 2-2-10

### **RATIONALE**

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is planning to expand the Blue Water Bridge plaza at the international crossing in Port Huron. Under the Selected Alternative approved by MDOT in May 2009, the existing 16-acre plaza will be expanded to 56 acres to accommodate larger traffic volume, reduce delays, and improve security. The new plaza will displace an estimated 125 residences and 30 businesses. In addition, a new International Welcome Center and other improvements will be added in Port Huron Township. The total cost of the project, including the plaza and I-94/I-96 corridor improvements, is expected to be \$553.0 million, according to estimates by MDOT. Some are concerned that the final cost of the project may exceed current projections, and have suggested that there be additional oversight to ensure public accountability for any cost over-runs.

### **CONTENT**

The bill would create the "Blue Water Bridge Expansion Oversight Reporting Act" to require the Michigan Department of Transportation to provide, at reasonable intervals, a written accounting of all expenditures related to the plaza expansion project and written updates as to whether it was staying within the budget for project expenditures, with full explanations for any expenditures beyond those budgeted.

The report and updates would have to be sent to all of the following:

- The members of the standing committees in the Senate and House of

Representatives that deal primarily with transportation and local government issues.

- Each member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee in the Senate and House of Representatives.
- Each elected State official in the county in which the expansion project is located.

The written updates would have to be submitted electronically.

### **ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

#### **Supporting Argument**

The Michigan Department of Transportation has been considering plans to expand the international border crossing plaza in Port Huron since 2002. The purpose of the project is to improve border security and to increase capacity to meet expected traffic growth through 2030, but the construction also will have significant impacts on the local economy. Given the size and complexity of the project, additional oversight is needed to determine if money allocated to the plaza expansion is being well spent, and to ensure that the concerns of local citizens are being heard and addressed. The bill would require regular reports to be made to local officials and the Legislature, and would provide for some accountability if the costs exceed current estimates.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no effect on local units. The cost of the report is anticipated to be negligible and would be absorbed by the Department's budget.

Fiscal Analyst: David Zin

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.