



STATE SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.
DISTRICT 27



Austin Capitol Office
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 463-0127

7 North Park Plaza
Brownsville, TX 78521
(956) 548-0227

500 S. Kansas
Weslaco, TX 78596
(956) 968-9927

June 22nd 2011

Lucio, Pinkerton Negotiate With TxDOT To Open Queen Isabella Causeway On Weekends

After much negotiation, the Texas Department of Transportation has agreed to open both eastbound lanes on the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway for the July 4th weekend - and every weekend this summer .

"I am very glad we were able to work with TxDOT and come to an agreement," Senator Lucio said. "Tourism is vital to South Texas and we must do everything that we can to enable our local economy." Senator Lucio is the Chairman of the Tourism Caucus of the Texas Legislature.

Earlier this week, Senator Lucio and Mayor Bob Pinkerton expressed their concerns to TxDOT regarding the traffic problems caused by maintenance work on the causeway. As a result, TxDOT agreed to suspend the eastbound lane closure and open two lanes going into South Padre Island starting with the weekends of June 24th and July 4th,"said Arnold Cortez, TxDOT's San Benito Area Engineer.

"District Engineer Mario Jorge has done a great job of renegotiating the contract in light of the traffic problems we are dealing with," Mayor Pinkerton said. "People were getting here tired and frustrated so undoubtedly it is going to have a great positive impact."

Visitors and residents alike have experienced traffic jams in recent weeks caused by a maintenance project on the causeway, which have led to the closure of one of the eastbound lanes. In some cases traffic has been backed up as far as Laguna Vista. The \$4 million project is the first major rehabilitation of the Queen Isabella Causeway's structural steel units in more than 15 years. The work consists of repairing corroded and damaged steel sections and applying a special coating.

"The whole episode again illustrates the immediate need for a second causeway to the Island," said Lucio. "An investment in a second causeway is an investment in the economy of the entire Valley."

This past legislative session, at the request of Senator Lucio, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1420 which authorizes the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority to enter into a comprehensive development agreement for the construction of a second causeway.

---END---