

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8599

To amend the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission Act, with respect to preparedness for COVID–19 and other infectious diseases in the border region, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2020

Ms. ESCOBAR (for herself, Mr. VELA, Mr. CORREA, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. CUELLAR) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission Act, with respect to preparedness for COVID–19 and other infectious diseases in the border region, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Binational Health
5 Strategies Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER HEALTH COMMIS-**
2 **SION INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS.**

3 The United States-Mexico Border Health Commis-
4 sion Act (22 U.S.C. 290n et seq.) is amended by inserting
5 after section 5 (22 U.S.C. 290n–5) the following:

6 **“SEC. 5A. INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS.**

7 “(a) COVID–19 RESPONSE.—Not later than 120
8 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and
9 annually thereafter (for as long as the Commission, acting
10 with the participation of members representing both the
11 United States and Mexican sections, determines is nec-
12 essary), the Commission shall submit to Congress a report
13 on the United States-Mexico Border Area’s response (be-
14 ginning on February 1, 2020) to COVID–19, including
15 with respect to testing, contact tracing, and other infection
16 prevention and control measures carried out in the United
17 States-Mexico Border Area, in both the United States and
18 Mexico.

19 “(b) COVID–19 BINATIONAL PLAN.—

20 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days
21 after the date of the enactment of this section, the
22 Commission (acting with the participation of mem-
23 bers representing both the United States and Mexi-
24 can sections) shall develop, and publish on a public
25 website of the Commission, a binational strategic

1 plan that addresses, with respect to COVID–19,
2 how—

3 “(A) the United States-Mexico Border
4 Area should strengthen its response to COVID–
5 19, with a focus on testing, contact tracing, and
6 other infection prevention and control measures;

7 “(B) the effect of COVID–19 on the eco-
8 nomic conditions in the United States-Mexico
9 Border Area may be mitigated;

10 “(C) the sharing of relevant health data,
11 with respect to COVID–19, including testing
12 and positivity rates, between health agencies
13 within the United States-Mexico Border Area
14 can be strengthened; and

15 “(D) a vaccine should be disbursed
16 throughout the United States-Mexico Border
17 Area, taking into account the various vulnerable
18 populations in the region.

19 “(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 60
20 days after the date of the enactment of this section,
21 the Commission (acting with the participation of
22 members representing both the United States and
23 Mexican sections) shall develop, and publish on a
24 public website of the Commission, what actions Fed-
25 eral agencies will take within the United States sec-

tion and agencies of the Government of Mexico will take within the Mexican section of the United States-Mexico Border Area to facilitate implementation of the plan under paragraph (1). At least once each year after the publication of such information, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report on actions taken by Federal agencies and agencies of the Government of Mexico to facilitate that implementation during the year covered by the report.

“(c) FUTURE INFECTIOUS DISEASE PLAN.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Commission shall develop and publish a plan to prepare and respond to infectious diseases (other than COVID–19) within the United States-Mexico Border Area. Such plan shall address how—

“(A) the United States-Mexico Border Area should strengthen its response to such infectious diseases, with a focus on testing, contact tracing, and other infection prevention and control measures;

“(B) the effect of such infectious diseases on the economic conditions in the United States-Mexico Border Area may be mitigated;

1 “(C) the sharing of relevant health data,
2 with respect to such infectious diseases, includ-
3 ing testing and positivity rates, between health
4 agencies within the United States-Mexico Bor-
5 der Area can be strengthened; and

6 “(D) a vaccine should be disbursed
7 throughout the United States-Mexico Border
8 Area, taking into account the various vulnerable
9 populations in the region.

10 “(2) UPDATES.—The Commission shall update
11 the plan published under paragraph (1) at least once
12 every 3 years for as long as the Commission, acting
13 with the participation of members representing both
14 the United States and Mexican sections, determines
15 is necessary.

16 “(3) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 60
17 days after the date of the enactment of this section,
18 the Commission (acting with the participation of
19 members representing both the United States and
20 Mexican sections) shall develop, and publish on a
21 public website of the Commission, what actions Fed-
22 eral agencies will take within the United States sec-
23 tion and agencies of the Government of Mexico will
24 take within the Mexican section of the United
25 States-Mexico Border Area to facilitate implementa-

1 tion of the plan under paragraph (1). At least once
2 a year after the publication of such information, the
3 Commission shall submit to Congress a report on ac-
4 tions taken by Federal agencies and agencies of the
5 Government of Mexico to facilitate that implementa-
6 tion during the year covered by the report.”.

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