

**SUBJECT:** Increasing the maximum allowable width of cotton transport vehicles

**COMMITTEE:** Transportation — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — Alexander, Siebert, Edwards, Hawley, Hill, Pickett, Uher  
0 nays  
2 absent — Finnell, Hartnett

**WITNESSES:** For — Gary Joiner, Texas Farm Bureau  
Against — None

**BACKGROUND :** The Transportation Code requires a one-time special registration of all farm vehicles transporting cotton and cotton-processing equipment on public roads. Cotton vehicles are required to display special license plates and are limited to a width of nine feet.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 920 would amend the Transportation Code to increase the maximum allowable width of cotton vehicles to 10 feet. It also would allow vehicles transporting cotton burrs and cotton-burr spreaders to register as cotton vehicles.  
  
CSHB 920 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 920 would benefit both cotton farmers and the public at-large. Currently, cotton farmers make two separate trips to cotton gins: once with one type of vehicle to deliver their cotton for ginning, then again with another vehicle used to pick up cotton burrs, a ginning by-product used as a source of nutrients and mulch on their fields. This two-step process is an expensive waste of time and gas for farmers and a cause of excessive wear and tear on county and state roads. It would be far more expeditious for farmers to hook up their portable cotton-burr spreaders behind their cotton trucks when they go to the gin. These spreaders extend only six inches beyond each side of the nine-foot cotton trucks, but even that small extension runs afoul of current law.

CSHB 920 would remedy this problem by extending the permissible width of cotton vehicles an extra foot and allowing for registration of cotton-burr spreaders as cotton vehicles.

The registration process would allow authorities a means of ensuring that these vehicles were safe to operate on public roadways during the limited season of cotton harvesting.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

**NOTES:**

The committee substitute added the requirement that vehicles transporting cotton burrs be registered as cotton vehicles and included vehicles transporting cotton burrs as subject to the size restrictions for cotton vehicles.