

SUBJECT: Eligibility requirements for roadside information signs for lodging

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Alexander, Siebert, Y. Davis, Edwards, Hamric, Hill, Noriega

0 nays

2 absent — Hawley, Uher

WITNESSES: For — Don Hansen, Texas Hotel and Motel Association

Against — None

On — Carlos Lopez, Texas Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND: In order to have information about a commercial business displayed on an official Texas state highway information sign, certain requirements about access to the highway must be met. Sec. 391.093, Transportation Code requires private commercial business establishments to have driveway access either to a frontage road or to a crossroad intersecting a highway to be eligible for a logo. These logos are displayed on blue Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) information signs listing gas, food, and lodging.

DIGEST: HB 1779 would change the eligibility requirements for roadside information logo signs provided by TxDOT. It would require TxDOT to amend its rules to provide that a lodging would be eligible to have its name displayed if it was visible from a highway or interchange served by the sign and was located on a street that was no more than two turns off the access or frontage road of the highway.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Some hotels and motels are clearly visible from a highway, yet they are not eligible for a logo on a blue TxDOT sign because they do not have driveway access to a frontage road or an intersecting crossroad. All lodging establishments that are visible from a highway deserve a logo on a sign for

that highway if they can easily be reached by motorists, as long as they meet all other TxDOT requirements for logos. It is not difficult to drive to clearly visible establishments only two turns off of the frontage road to a highway.

HB 1779 would cost the state no additional funds. Eligible businesses are responsible for funding the logos, which are added to the blue signs by a private company under contract with TxDOT. The bill would save businesses money since it would be cheaper to advertise with logos than to lease a billboard.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 1779 would not go far enough in expanding logo eligibility for establishments near highways. Gas and food establishments also should be eligible if they are only two turns off of a frontage road.