

SUBJECT: Creation of aviation development account within the state highway fund

COMMITTEE: Transportation — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Alexander, Siebert, Edwards, Hamric, Hawley, Hill, Noriega, Uher
1 nay — Y. Davis

WITNESSES: For — Jerry Hooper, Sr., Aircraft Owner and Pilots Association; Bill Looke, Brazoria County Airport; Ronald Hyde
Against — None
On — Dave Fulton, Texas Department of Transportation

DIGEST: CSHB 3402 would create an aviation development account within the state highway fund. Money in the account could be appropriated only to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to make loans or grants to meet air transportation needs in support of economic development or safety efforts.
This bill would take effect September 1, 1999.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Many airports across the state need to renovate and modernize their runways, passenger terminals, and other facilities. Communities that depend on airports for economic development often lack the funds to undertake major airport development projects. These communities are in danger of losing business opportunities if their airports cannot handle modern business aviation needs.
HB 3402 would create an account that TxDOT could use to allocate federal funds and other development grants targeted for aviation development. The account would not be intended for state revenue, and the bill would not require an appropriation of state revenue.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The committee substitute added language allowing loans and grants from the proposed account to be used for air transportation needs related to safety efforts. The substitute also specified that only TxDOT could use funds allocated to the proposed account.