

- SUBJECT:** Expanding highway eligibility for tourism-related directional signs
- COMMITTEE:** Transportation — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Krusee, Phillips, Harper-Brown, Deshotel, Haggerty, Harless, Hill, Macias, Murphy
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Dacota Julson, Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association)
- Against — None
- On — Carlos Lopez, Texas Department of Transportation
- BACKGROUND:** In 2005, the 79th Legislature approved SB 1137 by Madla, which created the tourist-oriented directional sign program (Transportation Code, sec. 391.099), administered by the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC). A winery, agricultural or other tourism-related business that derives a major portion of its income or visitors during its normal business season from highway users who do not live in the area can apply to have a sign erected providing direction to its establishment. The signs can be erected on any non-controlled access highway that is outside the corporate limits of a municipality with a population of at least 5,000. TTC may enter into a contract with an entity to erect signs on eligible highways. It is authorized to create rules, an application process, and fees to cover costs.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3441 would amend Transportation Code, sec. 391.099 to allow tourism-related signs to be erected along any non-controlled access highway as long as the placement of the sign complied with TTC rules governed by all applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.
- The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2007.