

**SUBJECT:** Authorizing escort flag vehicles to use flashing blue and amber lights

**COMMITTEE:** Transportation — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Canales, Landgraf, Y. Davis, Goldman, Hefner, Martinez, Ortega, Raney, E. Thompson

0 nays

4 absent — Bernal, Krause, Leman, Thierry

**WITNESSES:** For — Allen Fitts, Big Tex Escort Service; (*Registered, but did not testify:* John Esparza, Texas Trucking Association)

Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** Transportation Code sec. 547.305 prohibits a person from operating a motor vehicle with flashing or alternating red, white, or blue lights unless specifically authorized by the chapter or is a running lamp, headlamp, taillamp, backup lamp, or turn signal lamp that is used as authorized by law.

**DIGEST:** HB 61 would allow escort flag vehicles that precede or follow oversize or overweight vehicles to be equipped with alternating or flashing blue and amber lights.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 61 would promote the safe movement of oversize loads by making escort vehicles more noticeable. Studies show that drivers respond to flashing blue and amber lights with more caution than the orange flags escort vehicles currently use.

**OPPONENTS SAY:** No concerns identified.