

SUBJECT: Amending the governance of certain toll collection fee and fine structures

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 13 ayes — Canales, E. Thompson, Ashby, Bucy, Davis, Harris, Landgraf,
Lozano, Martinez, Ortega, Perez, Rogers, Smithee

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Enrique Martin, Blueridge Transportation Group; Mark Arnold,
Hunton Andrews Kurth and Blueridge; (*Registered, but did not testify*:
Thamara Narvaez, Harris County Commissioners Court; Thomas
Parkinson)

Against — Don Dixon; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Matt Long,
Fredericksburg Tea Party of Texas)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: James Bass, Texas Department of
Transportation)

DIGEST: HB 1116 would provide that a toll collected pursuant to an agreement
with a toll project entity other than the Texas Department of
Transportation (TxDOT) would be governed by the fee and fine structure
of the entity issuing the initial toll invoice.

Except as provided above, an entity operating a toll lane under a
comprehensive development agreement would have, with regard to toll
collection and enforcement, the same powers and duties as TxDOT under
state law governing state highway toll projects.

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, 2021.

SUPPORTERS
SAY: HB 1116 would simplify the process of paying tolls on certain toll roads.
Currently, drivers using a single continuous road may be unaware that

they are moving from one tolling authority to another if the road takes them into a different county. Those two segments of toll road operated by separate entities also could be administered differently, leading to multiple toll invoices with separate transactions and fees. Additionally, if the driver misses a violation notice, they cannot pay the fine with a single entity because the fines become administratively separated. HB 1116 would provide that certain tolls were governed by the fee and fine structure of the entity issuing the initial invoice, ensuring that no matter who operated the toll road, the toll collections would be uniform.

It is not within the scope of this bill to amend all toll authority regulations in the state, just to allow certain tolls to operate in a uniform way. This bill presents a simple solution that would provide consistency, curb driver confusion, and increase compliance in paying late fees on those toll roads.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 1116 would not go far enough in reforming tolling in Texas. Instead of different policies for tolling authorities in different regions of the state, there should be one unified system to simplify the process.