

SUBJECT: Allowing municipal employees to request the removal of certain vehicles

COMMITTEE: Licensing and Administrative Procedures — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — S. Thompson, Darby, Fierro, Geren, Guillen, Hernandez, Huberty, Pacheco

0 nays

3 absent — Kuempel, Ellzey, Goldman

WITNESSES: For — Maria Irshad, City of Houston (*Registered, but did not testify*; Brie Franco, City of Austin; Jamaal Smith, City of Houston Office of the Mayor; Christine Wright, City of San Antonio; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League)

Against — None

DIGEST: HB 914 would allow a municipality that had adopted an ordinance regulating the operation of vehicles for hire, including certain regulations on transportation network companies, to enforce the ordinance by authorizing a designated employee to request the removal of a vehicle operated in violation of the ordinance.

A towing company could remove, and a vehicle storage facility could store, such a vehicle without authorization by a peace officer.

The bill would allow an employee designated by a municipality that had adopted an ordinance regulating parking to request the removal and storage of a vehicle located in an area where on-street parking was regulated by the ordinance if the vehicle:

- was parked illegally; or
- was parked legally and had been unattended for more than 48 hours and the employee had reasonable grounds to believe was

abandoned.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 914 would give municipal governments a tool to remove illegally parked or operated and abandoned vehicles without burdening local police departments by empowering municipal employees to request that such vehicles be towed.

Vehicles parked illegally or abandoned on the street can dangerously block the flow of traffic and become a public nuisance. Currently, unless a vehicle is booted or parked in a residential permit parking area, municipal parking compliance officers must have the police request illegally parked or abandoned vehicles be towed. HB 914 would expand the ability of municipal employees to have abandoned vehicles and vehicles in violation of a local parking ordinance towed without requiring the local police to intervene. This would allow police to focus their resources on more pressing public safety issues and municipalities to quickly remove potentially dangerous vehicles from the streets.

HB 914 would not give too much power to municipal employees in enforcing parking ordinance violations since it merely would remove the extra step of having police officers request a tow.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 914 would give too much power to municipal employees by granting them the authority to have vehicles towed and impounded. This authority should be reserved to police departments, as violations of city ordinances are matters for law enforcement.

NOTES:

The author plans to introduce a floor amendment that would remove the section of the bill relating to the removal and storage of certain vehicles for hire in violation of a municipal ordinance.