

SUBJECT: Requiring and authorizing certain routes for overweight vehicles

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 12 ayes — Canales, Raney, Ashby, Davis, Gámez , Caroline Harris,
Lozano, Lujan, Ordaz, Patterson, Perez, Romero

0 nays

1 absent — Landgraf

SENATE VOTE: On final passage (April 12) — 31 - 0

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that certain currently authorized corridors for oversize or overweight trucks near the Texas-Mexico border are no longer safe due to criminal activity on the Mexican side of the Free Trade International Bridge. Some have suggested that alternative overweight corridors should be authorized.

DIGEST: SB 1418 would require the transportation commission to designate the most direct route from the Free Trade International Bridge to the western Cameron County line using Farm-to-Market Road 509 and U.S. Highway 281. The route designation would be for the purpose of a permit issued by a port authority in a county bordering Mexico for the movement of oversize or overweight vehicles carrying cargo on a state highway. The bill also would authorize the commission to designate another route in consultation with and with the consent of the port authority.

The bill would remove provisions authorizing routes to be designated from the Gateway International Bridge to the Port of Brownsville using certain highways, instead allowing only the designation of such a route from the Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates.

The bill would allow the commission to authorize a regional mobility

authority to issue permits for the movement of oversize or overweight vehicles carrying cargo in Hidalgo County on U.S. Highway 281 between its intersection with the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge and the eastern Hidalgo County line. The commission's ability to authorize permits for U.S. Highway 281 between the Pharr-Reynosa bridge and Spur 29 would be repealed.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.