

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1706
By: Ratliff
Finance
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As Filed

DIGEST

In June of 1996, citing funding shortfalls, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) announced its intent to eliminate the Texas Eagle. The Texas Eagle runs from Chicago and St. Louis to San Antonio, providing service to 19 Texas cities. Approximately 200,000 passengers travel through Texas on the Texas Eagle annually. This bill enables the Texas Department of Transportation to enter into a loan agreement with Amtrak to support the continuation of this national passenger rail service.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1706 authorizes the Texas Department of Transportation to enter into a loan agreement with an eligible corporation for funding passenger rail service.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 456.002(b), Transportation Code, to provide that each public transportation program provided by this chapter, with the exception of the passenger rail service assistance program under Subchapter D, is a matching grant program for public transportation projects.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 456, Transportation Code, by adding Subchapter D, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 456.061. DEFINITION. Defines "eligible corporation."

Sec. 456.062. LOANS TO CORPORATION. Authorizes the Texas Transportation Commission (commission), under the authority of Section 52-a, Article III, Texas Constitution, using funds appropriated from the general revenue fund for such purposes, to loan money to an eligible corporation that provides rail passenger service in the state.

Sec. 456.063. AGREEMENT. Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (department), on behalf of the commission and with the approval of the comptroller, to enter into an agreement, under terms and conditions it deems appropriate, with an eligible corporation for the purposes of making a loan under this subchapter.

Sec. 456.064. LIMITATION OF FUNDING. Authorizes the commission to only expend funds specifically appropriated by the legislature for the purposes of this subchapter.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.