

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 601
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Intergovernmental Relations
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Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST

Currently, metropolitan transit authorities (MTAs) are authorized under Chapters 451 and 452, Transportation Code. MTAs have been created in seven urban areas of the state: Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. The El Paso MTA is the only MTA in Texas that does not have any member communities; only the City of El Paso is included in the authority.

Of the remaining MTAs, all but the Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) and Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority have provisions that allow member communities, also called "units of election," to withdraw from an MTA. These provisions are found in Chapter 451, Transportation Code. Procedures for withdrawal include requirements for a petition from a percentage of registered voters in a member community, and an election to be held to determine whether to dissolve the authority in the member community.

If the member community votes to withdraw from the authority, a determination of the total amount of financial obligations of the withdrawn community is calculated. The collection of sales and use tax continues in the member community after withdrawal until the net financial obligation is paid to the authority. The net financial obligation includes the apportioned share of the authority's outstanding obligations, and any obligation specifically related to the unit that withdraws.

The Harris County METRO includes 14 units of election. S.B. 601 would provide member communities in the Harris County MTA with the ability to withdraw from the authority in accordance with Section 451.617, Transportation Code.

PURPOSE

As proposed, C.S.S.B. 601 outlines provisions regarding withdrawal of a unit from a rapid transit authority.

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 451.617(a), Transportation Code, as follows;

(a) Authorizes a unit of election, other than the principal municipality, to withdraw from the rapid transit authority (authority), in addition to any other manner provided by law, by a vote of a majority of the registered voters of the unit of election voting at an election on the question of withdrawing from the authority, in an authority created before 1980 in which the principal municipality has a population of 750,000 or more, rather than less than 1.2 million.

(b)-(d) Makes no changes.

(e) Prohibits an election from being held on a date earlier than the first anniversary of the date of the most recent election held, except as provided for in Subsection (f). Makes a conforming change.

(f) Prohibits an election from being held on a date earlier than the sixth anniversary of the date of the most recent held election, in an authority created before 1980 in which the principal municipality has a population greater than 1.6 million.

SECTION 2. Emergency clause.

Effective date: upon passage.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Amends SECTION 1, Section 451.617, Transportation Code, by adding Subsections (b)-(f), regarding withdrawal of a unit from a rapid transit authority.