

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 25
By: Armbrister
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As Filed

DIGEST

According to the comptroller in Disturbing the Peace, the Texas Department of Transportation developed its first comprehensive transportation plan in 1994, but is behind in enacting new developments in private-sector transportation systems and logistics. Current planning remains heavily focused on highways, despite the fact that deregulation of the transportation industry in the 1970s brought about a dramatic increase in intermodal traffic in the 1980s. Cooperation between the public and private sector cooperation can potentially play a particularly critical role in coordinating connections between rail and the state highway system. For example, West Texas manufacturers pay high rates to bring empty containers to the area for loading and then pay for transporting full containers to seaports. This has been attributed to the lack of an intermodal, doublestack facility in that region and may add as much as \$500 per container to the cost of transporting West Texas products.

This lack of sufficient transportation infrastructure may add to highway congestion. When air, rail, or water transport is not easily accessible, shippers turn often to commercial trucking firms to move goods. The cost of this additional traffic is particularly high for Texas, where urban growth and international trade stress the capacity of existing roads. Seventy percent of all U.S.-Mexico trade is expected to pass through Texas as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement. In addition, it is expected that during the next 10 years there will be 50 percent more cars on Texas roads.

In recent years the federal government and other states, in cooperation with the private sector, have begun to combine technological advances with computer systems to create and implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). ITS technology seeks to increase the safety and efficiency of the nation's transportation system, reduce costs, and increase competitiveness in the world economy. Effective transportation networks require the coordination of many activities across different rail, highway, sea, and air lanes. New ITS technologies may assist the public and private sectors in streamlining transportation functions and flows.

The use of ITS in urban areas is already underway in Houston and San Antonio, where systems are in place to monitor traffic conditions, control traffic signals, and respond quickly to accidents and emergencies. The comptroller suggests that since many goods carried by commercial trucks either have urban areas as their origination or destination, ITS technology in cities can enhance trucking efficiency. Outside of cities, trucking efficiency and safety may be enhanced by using an ITS technology known as transponder technology, which is used at weigh stations to automate the process and reduce the amount of time trucks spend pulled off the road. This may help to reduce the prevalence of overweight trucks on the road and reduce the potential for accidents surrounding trucking weight enforcement.

S.C.R. 25 would encourage cooperation among state, local, and federal government and the private sector to ensure better coordination of transportation resources through the use of technology.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.C.R. 25 submits the following resolutions:

To encourage the Texas Department of Transportation (department) to build partnerships with the Texas Department of Public Safety, federal and local governments, private sector

organizations, and other states to strategically apply technological advancements to our state's transportation infrastructure.

That the department ensure, where possible, that intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and automated vehicle regulation are compatible with advancements in private sector logistics.

That the secretary of state forward an official copy of this resolution to the commissioner of the department.