

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R6662 MTB-D

S.B. 1517
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State Affairs
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, although at least one-third of state departments of transportation (DOT) nationwide survey their customers, the results have not been tied to those departments' overall management systems. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has conducted a survey in one district, but does not regularly gather information from landowners and displacees that might help improve its right-of-way acquisition process. Improving the relationship with landowners and displacees may reduce the time needed to acquire right-of-way by reducing the number of negotiations that must be settled in court. As proposed, S.B. 1517 requires TxDOT to assess the performance of its acquisition agents and to resolve complaints by surveying landowners from which TxDOT acquires property for right-of-way. This bill also requires TxDOT to evaluate the survey and other information to determine whether an employee of a private entity can perform the functions of an acquisition agent better and at a lower cost than a TxDOT employee and report its findings to the legislature before January 1, 2003.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 224A, Transportation Code, by adding Section 224.009, as follows:

Sec. 224.009. RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION SURVEY. Defines "acquisition agent." Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (department) to submit a survey to certain property owners for certain purposes. Authorizes the department to contract for the collection and analysis of completed surveys. Requires the department to use the analysis for certain purposes.

SECTION 2. Requires the department to evaluate the results of the survey under Section 224.009, Transportation Code, as added by this Act, and consider other relevant information for certain purposes. Requires the department, before January 1, 2003, to report its findings to the legislature.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2001.