

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R6018 JD-D

C.S.S.B. 132
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Transportation & Homeland Security
2/8/2007
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

As cities in Texas grow more populated, traffic congestion becomes a greater problem. Using mass transit vehicles to bypass traffic congestion on roads and highways on improved shoulders is a potential solution to the problem of growing traffic congestion. By allowing public transportation to use the shoulders on state highways, regardless of traffic conditions, the number of cars on streets or state highways during peak hours may potentially be lowered. Current law, however, provides only for emergency vehicles, bicycles, and stranded vehicles to use the shoulders on state highways.

C.S.S.B. 132 allows mass transit motor bus vehicles to operate on the improved shoulders of state highways during periods of traffic congestion. This would remove mass transit vehicles from high traffic corridors or segments of our highways that are prone to congestion, allowing the remaining traffic to flow more smoothly.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 455, Transportation Code, by adding Section 455.006, as follows:

Sec. 455.006. MOTOR BUS-ONLY LANE PROGRAM. Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in consultation with the Department of Public Safety and in conjunction with certain transportation authorities and counties and municipalities, to establish and operate a motor bus-only lane program (program) on state highways that have shoulders of sufficient width and structural integrity. Sets forth certain requirements for the program. Requires TxDOT to initiate the program as soon as practicable but not later than December 31, 2007.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 542.002, Transportation Code, by deleting existing text specifying authorized emergency vehicles as being the only vehicles subject to exceptions to Subtitle C (Rules of the Road), Title 7, Transportation Code, regarding vehicles on highways.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 545.058(c), Transportation Code, to include a motor bus of certain transportation entities described in Section 455.006, Transportation Code, as being exempt from certain limitations on driving on improved shoulders.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 545.352, Transportation Code, by adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(c-1) Specifies that the maximum speed limit for certain motor buses operating on the shoulder of a highway designated as a motor bus-only lane by TxDOT is 55 miles per hour.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.