

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 646
By: Hughes, Leibowitz (Eltife)
Transportation & Homeland Security
5/15/2009
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

United States Public Law No. 97-213, adopted in 1982, authorized the creation of the Southern High-Speed Rail Commission (commission), an interstate organization tasked with studying the feasibility of high speed rail between southern states. The federal law originally authorized the states of Louisiana and Mississippi to join the commission, with the stipulation that any state contiguous to a member state could become a part of the compact, subject to the ratification of the legislature of each member state and the consent of the U.S. Congress. Shortly after the federal legislation passed, the Alabama legislature authorized that state to join the commission.

H.B. 646 authorizes the governor, on behalf of the state, to execute the Southern High-Speed Rail Compact, thereby allowing Texas to participate in the interstate commission that will assist in conducting a feasibility study of rapid rail service between the member states: Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Southern High-Speed Rail Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 462.002, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle K, Title 6, Transportation Code, by adding Chapter 462, as follows:

CHAPTER 462. SOUTHERN HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMPACT

Sec. 462.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "commission" and "party state."

Sec. 462.002. EXECUTION AND TEXT OF COMPACT. Provides that the governor, on behalf of this state, is hereby authorized to execute a compact in a certain form with the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama, and the legislature hereby signifies in advance its approval and ratification of such compact. Sets forth the language of the Southern High-Speed Rail Compact.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.