

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 249
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Transportation & Homeland Security
3/30/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, H.B. 3437 was passed, authorizing the regional mobility authorities (RMAs) in Hidalgo and Cameron counties to collect up to \$10 per vehicle registered in those counties to finance transportation projects in the area. With state and federal transportation funds becoming more scarce, it is crucial for local governments to have the authority to implement innovative financing techniques for short-term and long-term transportation projects.

El Paso's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), along with other metropolitan areas in Texas, has experienced significant growth without a corresponding increase in funding to increase the capacity of the transportation system. The Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan has identified an additional need of more than \$6 billion to address all of the mobility needs for El Paso County. This does not include the immediate need to repay bonds authorized by Proposition 14. Additional funds may be needed to accomplish the stated goals of the plan.

C.S.S.B. 249 provides that El Paso County is eligible to impose an optional fee on registration of a vehicle to fund transportation projects. C.S.S.B. 249 requires the county to deposit the fee revenue, sent by the Texas Department of Transportation, in a special account in the county general fund. This bill authorizes money in the account to be used only to fund the costs of constructing and maintaining public roadway projects in the county and acquiring rights-of-way for those projects and authorizes the county to enter into a contract for a project with a public entity authorized by law to construct public roadway projects in the county.

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 Sections 502.1725(a), (f), and (g), Transportation Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that this section applies only to a county that either has no municipality with a population of 300,000 or more or that borders another state of the United States. Deletes existing text providing that this section applies only to a county in which the largest municipality has a population of less than 300,000.

(f) Requires the county to deposit the fee revenue in a special account in the county general fund. Authorizes money in the account to be used only to fund the costs of constructing and maintaining public roadway projects in the county and acquiring rights-of-way for those projects. Authorizes the county to enter into a contract for a project with a public entity authorized by law to construct public roadway projects in the county. Deletes existing text requiring the county to send the fee revenue to the regional mobility authority of the county to fund long-term transportation projects in the county.

(g) Requires the Texas Department of Transportation to send all fees collected for a county under this subsection to the county for deposit and use as provided by Subsection (f). Makes a conforming change.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.