

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R12905 BEE-D

S.B. 1351  
By: Watson  
Transportation  
4/21/2017  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Transportation Code requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to follow the specifications adopted by the Transportation Commission in the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD) when TxDOT decides where to place traffic lights on state highways. The TMUTCD contains nine warrants, or factors, that TxDOT may consider as part of this process. The warrants include factors like the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the presence of a school or grade crossing, and crash experience.

Recently, at least one municipality requested the installation of a traffic light to help its emergency vehicles enter a state highway only to have this request denied because the existing warrants do not cover this particular need. And, under current law, a local authority may not place a traffic light on a state highway without TxDOT's permission. The inability to obtain a traffic light in this situation poses a safety hazard for those who are in or around an emergency vehicle as it tries to enter a state highway.

S.B. 1351 addresses this problem by requiring the TMUTCD to provide for the placement of a traffic light that permits an emergency vehicle to safely enter a state highway in a municipality at a location to be determined by the municipality. In other words, S.B. 1351 creates a new traffic light warrant to address this specific safety hazard.

As proposed, S.B. 1351 amends current law relating to allowing the placement and maintenance of traffic-control signals in municipalities to permit emergency vehicles to safely enter a highway.

### **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 544, Transportation Code by adding Section 544.0025, as follows:

Sec. 544.0025. PLACING AND MAINTAINING SIGNAL FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLE ENTRY ONTO HIGHWAY IN A MUNICIPALITY. Requires the manual and specifications adopted under Section 544.001 (Adoption of Sign Manual for State Highways) to provide for the placement and maintenance of a traffic-control signal as described by Section 544.007(a) (relating to the display of certain traffic-control signals) that permits an emergency vehicle to safely enter a highway in a municipality at a location to be determined by the municipality.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.