

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 6, 2003

TO: Honorable Steve Ogden, Chair, Senate Committee on Infrastructure Development and Security

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB1558 by Brimer (Relating to the creation and powers of a north Texas regional mobility authority.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Transportation Code to authorize the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) to create the North Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NTRMA), which would include the counties of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Parker, Rockwall, and Tarrant. The bill would provide guidelines for establishing the governing body of the NTRMA and would establish necessary powers, duties, guidelines, requirements, and restrictions for the NTRMA. The bill would also provide guidelines and requirements for election ballots and notices of elections.

Based on the analysis of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), it is assumed that duties and responsibilities associated with implementing the provisions of the bill could be accomplished by utilizing existing resources. This analysis assumes any savings realized by TxDOT related to relinquishing maintenance of a segment of the free highway system to the NTRMA would be used for other transportation projects.

The bill would take effect immediately if it receives a two-thirds vote in each house; otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2003.

Local Government Impact

Initial costs to the counties that would be part of the North Texas Regional Mobility Authority would be for an election to obtain voter approval for creating a toll system.

Each of the counties that would be included in the NTRMA were contacted regarding the fiscal impact if the provisions of the bill were to be implemented. A response was received from Denton County and Collin County.

According to the county auditor in Denton County, the NTRMA would replace a recently created county transportation authority, although no fiscal impact was described relating to that change. While estimated costs and savings were not calculated, Denton County assumes there would be a savings to the county if regional transportation projects could be locally funded as toll roads rather than through county taxes or bonds. New costs would be created, however, if a county were required to bear an inordinate percentage of the costs of an NTRMA project.

The county judge in Collin County, who is also the current co-chair of the Dallas Area Mobility Coalition and former director of the North Texas Tollway Authority, provided estimates that were based on projections made by the Tollway Authority and by a private contractor. To convert Interstate 30 to a toll road with barrier plazas and entrance/exit ramps would cost a total of \$265 million. Staffing for the toll road would cost approximately \$28 million annually. The county judge stated that the potential revenue estimated was \$600 million, but he believes that is inaccurately high; that estimate was based on current traffic volume. He stated that typically, as evidenced by the Dallas

North Tollway and the President George Bush Tollway, traffic volume is reduced by 30 percent to 50 percent when a toll is collected.

Additionally, the Collin County judge indicates the stretch of road that would be applicable under the provisions of the bill is in need of extensive maintenance and additional capacity. Converting free roads in the area other than I-30 are expected to be even costlier because of the amount of retrofitting and conversions that would be required.

Source Agencies: 601 Department of Transportation

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