

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2135  
By: Phillips  
Culture, Recreation, & Tourism  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Texas currently has no highway sign program that is specifically designed to highlight tourist destinations and promote tourism in the state. Tourism is a major industry in the state. During 2003, travel spending in Texas directly supported 478,000 jobs with earnings of \$13.3 billion. Total direct travel spending in Texas was \$41.2 billion in 2003. These figures could be enhanced with a highway sign program that points out destinations that are off of the highway system.

H.B. 2135 would create the Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign Program to promote tourism in Texas.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is delegated to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in Section 1 of the bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Adds §391.099 to the Transportation Code to create the Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign Program to be administered by TxDOT. Defines facilities that are eligible to participate in the program and highways that are eligible to have tourist-oriented directional signs placed on them. Defines "tourist-oriented directional sign" and "trailblazing." Provides oversight to TxDOT over the content, composition, design, placement, erection, and maintenance of tourist-oriented directional signs.

Directs TxDOT to adopt rules to implement the program. Provides that TxDOT must approve or disapprove an application for a tourist-oriented directional sign within 60 days if no additional information is required of the applicant or within 30 days of receiving any additional information requested by the department. Allows TxDOT to contract with entities to erect and maintain the signs. Provides that TxDOT may not adopt rules to prohibit a sign from being placed based on trailblazing off of the state highway system.

SECTION 2. Effective Date. September 1, 2005

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2005

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE**

The substitute alters the language in the original bill to comply with federal sign placement standards and prevents the loss of federal funds.