

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 160
By: Menendez
Transportation
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Last year, Texas had 342 train accidents. Bexar County had 23 incidents, which was the third highest among counties, behind Harris and Tarrant Counties. In 2004, a collision of two trains near San Antonio spewed chlorine, killing four people and hospitalizing at least 30. In October 2006, another derailment in San Antonio smashed two homes after 17 boxcars jumped off the tracks. These train accidents are putting Texas families in unnecessary danger in their own backyards.

HB 160 would require the Texas Department of Transportation to conduct a study to determine the economic feasibility of relocating freight trains carrying hazardous materials away from residential areas of the state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 160 provides that no later than March 1, 2008, an economic feasibility study be conducted by the Texas Department of Transportation on relocating freight trains carrying hazardous materials away from residential areas of the state. The study must include an evaluation of cost options for the relocation of freight trains from residential areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

Committee amendment #1 brackets the bill for populations of 1.2 million or more.